GUIDE TO EASIER LIVING

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One-room apartment furnished entirely with inexpensive and practical *Easier Living* group of products **designed by Russel Wright. Draperies** (22), floor tile (22), and seat covers in dining corner are of vinyl. **Carpet in seating section** has "spots" designed-in; daybed, with bedding compartment, and lounging **chairs have slip-cover upholstery for ease of cleaning. Coffee table has a top of scratch-, stain-, and burn-proof porcelain; all wood is finished to withstand water and alcohol marks.** (*Numerals refer to listing of manufacturers, Appendix B, page 194. Photo courtesy of McCall's.*)

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Easier Living: A living room with asphalt-tile floor, well-defined conversation and dining areas, tight-seat upholstery, contour plywood chairs, simple drapes, simple lighting equipment—all of which make for ease in housekeeping and a warm and friendly appearance, in a medium-priced home. (*Idea House II, designed for the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, by William Friedman and Hilde Reiss. Photo courtesy of McCall's.*)

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Mary and Russel Wright's

GUIDE TO

EASIER LIVING

NEW REVISED EDITION

SIMON AND SCHUSTER, NEW YORK

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REPLACING

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We are indebted to the talented James Kingsland for all of the drawings, executed under our direction—and to Carol and Joseph Roberto for the planning of the closets.

Dedication

We dedicate this book to: Dorcas Hollingsworth, who for years served our household with great artistry, and whom we miss very much. On the other hand, if she hadn't left us, we would never have written this book. . . . And to: the whole present generation, who will never have a Dorcas Hollingsworth.

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CHAPTER I

HOME, SWEET HOME

BE IT EVER SO HUMBLE, the words of the song tell us, there's no place like home. But the American home today, it must be admitted, is far from living up to that comforting lyric.

Do our homes really express the ideals of democracy and individualism we all profess? Do they provide a place where we can relax together, where a spirit of family living can thrive? Are they efficient, capable of being kept in order without an unduly heavy expenditure of time and energy?

The answer to any such questions, in all too many cases, must be a sorrowful No.

In this increasingly mechanized civilization, our homes are the one remaining place for personal expression, the place where we could really be ourselves. But in actuality they are more often than not undistinguished and without individuality, monuments to meaningless conformity.

As most of us live today, routine care and maintenance of the home demands an exhausting amount of labor. According to a survey conducted by Bryn Mawr College, a rural housewife spends an average of almost 61 hours a week at her household tasks, and a big city housewife about 80 hours!

All too often, comfort, ease, and spontaneity are all sacrificed to an unrealistic dream that makes home life formal and unsatisfying. Far from drawing families together, our homes send adolescent children to the juke joints for their fun, lead husbands to prefer a movie or the local bar for their after-work relaxation, make entertaining friends an ordeal of drudgery. We face today an increasing amount of juvenile delinquency, and an annual divorce toll that approaches 25 per cent of the marriage rate—a clear statistical indication that there are serious lacks in American family life. There

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are in our times a multitude of complex motives for adolescents getting into trouble, or marriages breaking up, but it is not too far-fetched to say that our homes and the way we live in them must be listed among the important causes.

If the American home is inadequate, it is our belief that this inadequacy must be attributed primarily to a continued adherence to an ill-fitting and outmoded çultural pattern.

Apparently impelled by feelings of inferiority, Americans have until comparatively recently begged or borrowed much of their culture from abroad. Thus the stilted ritual of the English manor house—where life was rigidly formal and a staff of servants waited on master and mistress hand and foot—became the standard of "gracious living" for the American home. But a hard-working democracy was poor soil for this aristocratic way of life. Except for a small minority of families, the American version of such feudal luxury was never more than a patched hand-me-down.

Nevertheless, this tradition is still very much with us. Bequeathed to us by our grandmothers, nurtured by our mothers, and subtly preached by that able evangelist Emily Post, the Dear Old Dream dominates writing and merchandising concerned with the home, haunts domestic architecture across the country, and tyrannically rules American family life.

Perhaps the Old Dream suited our grandmothers. But today an industrial democracy is swallowing up the remnants of the feudal past. A broader base of education, and drastic changes in our entire social and economic outlook, should make it obvious that a pattern of home life based on aristocratic snobbery is not only absurd, impossible, but actually something to be ashamed of.

Our way of life has changed sharply even from that of the preceding generation. Wives are now more likely to have business careers of their own, to have other interests besides management of the home. The home itself is smaller; rooms must serve more than one purpose. And with most of those who might once have made up a "servant class" now engaged in a variety of other occupations, we must manage these homes with part-time help or no help at all—instead of with the retainers on which the aristocratic life depends.

Yet the Old Dream has saddled us with fussy homes, with a code of snobbish manners in a time of social change, with a dictatorship of etiquette that stifles individuality. We don't dare

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break the rules, however idiotic they may be, for fear someone will think us "uncultured." We shape our home lives as if they were exhibits in a national competition designed to make our neighbors feel that we are better than they are.

All over America we build and furnish our homes, and live in them, as though there were retinues of servants to do the work, even though the majority of American families have *never* been able to afford domestic help. We set a superfluously ornate table for company at dinner and play at being lord and lady of the manor —even though we must double as cook, butler, waitress, scullery maid, and footman.

All this brings about a basic conflict. Certainly more than a few of today's many frustrations and guilt complexes, as well as family failures, have their roots in the struggle to fit our twentieth-century selves into an eighteenth-century corset. The Dear Old Dream is deeply imbedded in the minds of both the American husband and the American wife. It is true that each can often perceive the irrationality of the other's attitude toward the home, but they can rarely see the motes in their own eyes.

From childhood, men are taught to be unsympathetic toward housework, ignorant of its problems and techniques, and contemptuous of it as "woman's work." Few men have the courage to be caught with a broom in their hands. But the weekly working hours of the man have generally been reduced to 40, while, as Bryn Mawr's report of the housewife's 60-to-80-hour week shows, despite modern labor-saving appliances, "woman's work is never done." Any wife would appear completely justified in resenting the masculine hands-off attitude.

And if a man does at last become aware of the monstrous daily routine of keeping a house in order (a job to which his thoughtlessness contributes no little), he is likely merely to suggest another mechanical device, a collection of appliances, a push-button fantasy.

The Dear Old Dream has set up other impractical attitudes in the woman of the house. The home is traditionally woman's responsibility; the rearing of children who will mind their manners and abide by conventional rules is her task; and she is expected to keep a home that will compete favorably with those of her neighbors. The legend also makes the home her only proper means of expression, her absolute domain; it encourages her to plan, furnish,

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and decorate without regard for—often in direct conflict with—the needs of her husband and children. Hence the pressures that make scolds out of so many women, who are constantly after their families to keep coke bottles off the coffee table, feet off the sofa.

Tradition dictates that the housewife must be a fluffball of femininity, resistant to all masculine attempts at budgeting and planning or to any scientific suggestions for simplifying her work. It also encourages her to fill her house with all kinds of impractical sillinesses: a woman must be impulsive and romantic about her home, even at the price of an aching back.

Lastly, the aristocratic tradition has implanted in both men and women one attitude in common: the thoroughly unrealistic attitude that housework is menial, low-class, degrading.

Manufacturers and retailers of furniture and home furnishings, national magazines, the women's pages of the newspapers (with a few notable exceptions), have long done much—whether consciously or not—to preserve these attitudes. The Old Dream House, or some facet of it, is still repeated in millions of full-color magazine pages monthly, on millions of newspaper pages daily. Tempting in its romantic nostalgia, it subtly implies that a woman whose living room is not modeled after Mount Vernon is really no lady. Even when they coax us to buy something "modern" this year, the style monitors generally mean something that merely looks different, but is not better suited to our way of life. The industry spends uncounted amounts of money and talent in selling us a "new look" each year—Chinese Modern today and French Provincial tomorrow.

The entire fiction of "gracious living" is a cruel charade, imposed on us by a set of standards we should have discarded long ago. We are victimized by the illusion of generations who had the kind of servants we do not have, afraid to change anything in the interest of comfort, work-saving, or better family living, hearing inside our very walls the scornful whisper that we can't afford, or don't know how, or haven't the taste to do things "properly." The Dear Old Dream dictatorship is a stifling influence in American life.

So there is a need for a new pattern, one more suitable to the world of today, a new kind of home and a new way of living in it. What will it be like? This book will attempt to point the way.

We believe the new American home will be a much simpler one to live in. Its size and its furnishings will be determined by the

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family's needs, not by the arbitrary dictates of fashion. Living in it will be based on an informal and improvised design, rather than on a formal, traditional pattern. Its etiquette will derive from modern democratic ideals.

A new way of living, informal, relaxed, and actually more gracious than any strained imitation of another day could be, is in fact growing up, despite the etiquette despots and the die-hards. There is evidence all around that the hard shell of snobbish convention is cracking. Casual clothes invade many precincts once sacred to formal attire. The relaxed cocktail party or barbecue is a far more popular way of entertaining friends these days than the stiff dinner or the formal tea party.

The truth is that the American woman of today does not live in the elegance that the books of etiquette prescribe or the advertising industry would have us believe. She cuts corners and makes compromises in order to get her work done, but she does so as though it were a secret vice. She apologizes for the cooking pot brought to the table to double as a serving dish. She gives an outdoor barbecue in an easy, informal style, but does not dare to entertain indoors with the same casualness.

The whole home furnishings industry shares her state of embarrassment. Manufacturers seem uncertain whether to cling to the old way or plunge into the new. But those who serve the American home—the manufacturers who produce for it, the retailers who distribute the products, the press that educates us to their use—can profit as much from selling *service* as from selling *style*. The appliance industry is shining proof of this.

The kitchen is the one place in the home where the fact that the American woman does her own housework has been honestly faced. In the kitchen the combined genius of architects, engineers, designers, home economists, and manufacturers has dramatically lightened women's work and has provided one of the great technological contributions to home life in centuries—an American achievement as typical, and as impressive, as American skyscrapers, highways, and jazz.

The kitchen still continues to be scrutinized by experts with a zeal for even greater improvement. The appliance industry sponsors home economics research in the universities and maintains laboratories of its own, which have helped it to produce miracles of work-saving profitably, from the pin-up can opener to the deep-

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freeze. They are now developing an electronic range that can bake a potato in 45 seconds.

Let other industries turn such scrutiny and energy on the rest of the home. In this most clothes-conscious nation, furniture manufacturers could focus attention on the still unsolved problem of clothes storage. Let experts make a study of home recreation habits and how best to provide for them. Let the makers of floor coverings subsidize a research project aimed at reducing the drudgery of cleaning the floor. Let chemists evolve better disposable dishes, soap manufacturers underwrite research in the cleaning of woodwork, utensil manufacturers produce pots that their customers will not be ashamed to bring to the table.

But it will not be until homemakers show definite indications of adopting a new ideal for their homes that the producers and distributors can be expected to meet such demands.

A new pattern is not evolved overnight. Meanwhile, this transition period is difficult for all of us. We cannot relinquish all at once attitudes deeply rooted in us from childhood. But for the sake of human economy and a fuller, richer home life, we must consciously strive to free ourselves from the outmoded Old Dream.

The American man has learned to push a baby carriage with pride, and to listen to the child psychologists on his important role as a father. He will also learn that it is not beneath his dignity to push a vacuum cleaner. More important, he must learn, with his increasing free time, to find more and more self-expression in the home. As the assembly line encroaches more and more on our working life, crowding out individual creative expression, the need for a home in which we can realize ourselves as individuals becomes increasingly urgent.

The American wife must come to recognize this need, and she must also realize that a good home is no longer a one-woman operation. Indeed, the participation of the whole family is very much needed; unless she wants to remain a drudge, the American woman will have to make room for her husband and children in the planning and running of the home. (Even if he only washes the dishes, let him wash them in his own way!)

Part of this new attitude is the realization that while housework is unavoidable, it need not be old-fashioned drudgery. What is the validity of the aristocratic notion that housework is, in itself, degrading? Why should we consider housework in our own

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homes as "beneath" us? After all, it is our own dishes we are washing, our own beds we are making. This is all part of the natural process of our lives; surely it is better that we, rather than outsiders, should do work that is so personal.

Once we have learned to arrange our homes and our work realistically, housework can be fairly painless. Under certain conditions it can even be relaxing and pleasurable; when the work becomes part of family life, getting it done *together* can be as productive of family growth and understanding as playing together.

The housewife must scrutinize her scale of values and ask herself which means more to the family: a delicate cream-colored carpet or a pet puppy; keeping up with Mrs. Jones or a livable home. If after thinking it over she still wants the cream-colored carpet—or a Regency living room or shelves of Dresden figurines—let her at least also face the fact that this means more work, and balance that kind of pleasure against the labor it entails.

We feel certain that once she has realized the total absurdity of the Old Dream, the American woman will choose the more practical approach, the less romantic and less laborious path. Many women already accept this idea in principle. They see the compelling good sense as well as the deeper values of shaping the home realistically, not to impress the neighbors or to live up to a tradition, but to serve their families and themselves. Putting the principle into practice, however, is quite another matter.

What will such a home look like? With so much concentration on the useful and the laborsaving, won't warmth and beauty be left out? Will life in this home sacrifice all grace and charm? In giving up the Dream Home of the past may we not be giving up the "finer things of life," the niceties that were always supposed to indicate "breeding" and "culture"?

Beauty and grace are not easy to talk about, except for poets. Few of us feel secure before such words as "taste," "design," "harmony." This is one more reason why the conventional styles maintain an iron grip on us. How much easier to follow a well-charted course than to adventure into the unknown with only your own judgment as a guide!

But there is more than one kind of beauty, charm, or grace. Standards are constantly changing: the lush curves of a woman who was beautiful to Rubens would not be beautiful to us, and the gingerbread architecture adored by our grandmothers is not our

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idea of a beautiful house. The beauty of an eighteenth-century drawing room was a perfect expression of its time, but it is not a perfect expression of ours.

The beauty of the Old Dream Home is based on formal design, and on the romantic associations derived from shapes and materials of the past. Another kind of beauty is to be found in informal design, and this kind is the apt expression of our own times. We too can create beauty, but in new shapes and materials, without nostalgic associations but with something added that the old forms do not have—the excitement of newness and the reality of belonging to us, our own creation out of our own way of life.

Of course not everything that is new will automatically be beautiful, or even pleasing. We are entering a period of experimentation, and much that is offered is certain to be found wanting, and be discarded by popular taste. But if we keep our minds unfettered by tradition, a new standard is bound to develop that is both practical and good-looking—the best expressions of our own era will inevitably come to be what we can truly consider "beautiful."

This new beauty is already developing. There is no need to venture out into totally uncharted seas. There are whole groups of people in America who have broken away from convention to make their own setting for living, and we can learn from them.

For example, there are the many artists whose studios are part of their homes. They manage to work, raise children, and entertain their friends—more often than not in close quarters and without servants. Their way of life is, by choice, informal. From them we can learn freedom from pretension.

There are the Californians, who are exerting a real influence on us in many ways. They seem to follow primarily an impulse toward light, space, and color, expressing a willingness to disregard tradition and try anything new. From them we can learn improvisation.

And there are the devotees of modern design, who, with more culture than cash, often manage to convert a tenement flat into a jewel of functional organization. From them we can learn how an informal home can be as meticulously perfect as a formal one.

Good informal living substitutes a little headwork for a lot of legwork. It doesn't need wealth, but it does take thought, some ingenuity and resourcefulness, and more than a little loving care to create a home that is really your own.

You will live in your home, and you must weigh the value of the

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things that go into it. You alone can estimate labor in proportion to happiness and comfort. Eliminate trimmings that give little return for your care, and concentrate on those things which have real value for you. Buy slowly; know what you're buying and for what purpose.

With this approach you look for furnishings that are practical as well as appealing. You think of the floor not just as a base for the handsomest rug you can afford, but possibly as a space to clear for dancing, and certainly as a surface to be taken care of. You hunt for a type of flooring that is not only durable and easy to clean, but also good-looking in a particular room.

Copying your living room from a magazine may seem easier, just as it seems easier to remember how Mother used to serve dinner or to look up the "right" way in the etiquette book. But it is not easier in the long run; a way of living borrowed from anyone else, from Mrs. Jones or Emily Post or your mother, can't fit your family. The more imitation, the more discontent, frustration, and discord.

A home carefully planned around the requirements of your own family will provide much richer satisfactions. Imitation of other people's ways holds pale pleasure at best beside that of creating one's own. You will find that you have your own way of cooking, your own way of housekeeping, that you can develop your own brand of entertaining. In evolving the family pattern together, you and your family may well find new understanding, perhaps even some undiscovered talent.

Once you've shaken free of traditionalism, don't, for heaven's sake, go looking for a new type of Dream House, or for a new Emily Post to put yourself in bondage to. Don't swallow anyone's ideas whole, not even the ones in this volume.

This book is not intended to lay down a new set of rules. It is a tour through the house, room by room, function by function; it is an examination of floors and walls and furniture, of housekeeping and entertaining your guests. It offers a host of workable ideas, suggestions, and concrete information tested in the laboratory or in our everyday life. Certainly, some of it will not fit your situation; even what you reject, however, may stimulate your imagination toward something that will suit you—and your improvisations may be as good as ours, or better than ours. We hope you will steel yourself against traditionalism for its own sake, and

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use this book as a guide toward your own best plan for a home and a way of living in it.

We believe that the new way will be a better one, because it is more honest and better attuned with our time. We believe it will bring values to home life that far outweigh the disappearing values of the past. Whatever mysterious pleasure a man has derived from wearing a tuxedo is well compensated by the comfort of a sports jacket. A weekend in the home of good friends may even be more enjoyable if you make beds and help with meals: briefly you are sharing in their lives. A father who remembers to buy ice cream for dessert on his way home, and takes time to play with the children after dinner, has probably achieved a complete break from the worries of his day's work, and certainly gains a closer sense of identification with his family.

In short, we believe that a formal dinner served on bone china by lackeys, with antique crystal and old lace and candlelight, isn't in the same league with the relaxation and friendly warmth, the comfort and gaiety, and the much better digestion of a meal free of servants and strain, served at the kitchen table.

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CHAPTER II

ROOM TO RELAX

THE LIVING ROOM, where leisure hours are spent, should be the most satisfactory room in the home. Instead it is the most frequent cause of cross words. Daughter leaves her shoes under the sofa, son brings milk and crackers in with his math book, and the man of the house is caught putting his feet on the coffee table. A gathering of teen-agers makes a shambles of the room. Even a quiet adult evening may leave its cigarette burns and moisture rings. Most living rooms today just can't take being lived in.

Our demands on the living room are quite extensive and varied. Consider this not extreme, probably not even complete list of leisure-hour living-room activities:

For the Family	With Others
after-dinner sitting	cards or more active games
reading; including Sunday papers	dancing, and square dancing
knitting, sewing, dress-fitting	business, committee meetings
radio, phonograph listening	refreshments
television, home movies	formal and informal parties of all sizes
letter writing, accounts	overnight guests
children's homework	dining
father's homework	
hobbies	
family discussions	

Then consider that we also attempt to make this room serve as the family's show place—a room that must always be formally correct and beautiful, always kept immaculate in case guests drop in unexpectedly, and always intended to make the world think we have a bit more culture, more expensive tastes, and a larger income than we actually do have.

The Victorian parlor was a room devoted exclusively to receiving, entertaining, and impressing guests—but unlike so many Victorian homes, most of us haven't enough space to permit a whole series of specialized living rooms. Yet housewives continue to hang onto the parlor idea, making their single living room impractically "impressive": deep-pile carpets, dust-catching over-

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decorated furniture, intricately carved chairs, fragile coffee tables and consoles—old-fashioned in spirit, no matter how it may be "modernized" with reflector lamps, Venetian blinds, and other such anachronisms. The largest share of the average family's furnishing and decorating budget is spent on the living room; the most persistent and exhausting housewifely attention is devoted to it; nevertheless the average living room fails to serve adequately what should be its most important function—being the family's room for relaxation.

The only conclusion possible is that the housewife must abandon the Victorian ideal—unless she is prepared to sacrifice the family's relaxation, and also to subject herself to extensive and unnecessary housekeeping labor.

Of course we want our living room to be attractive as well as comfortable. A room that is well planned, and properly equipped, to serve its purposes will meet both these requirements—and also keep its good looks while being used.

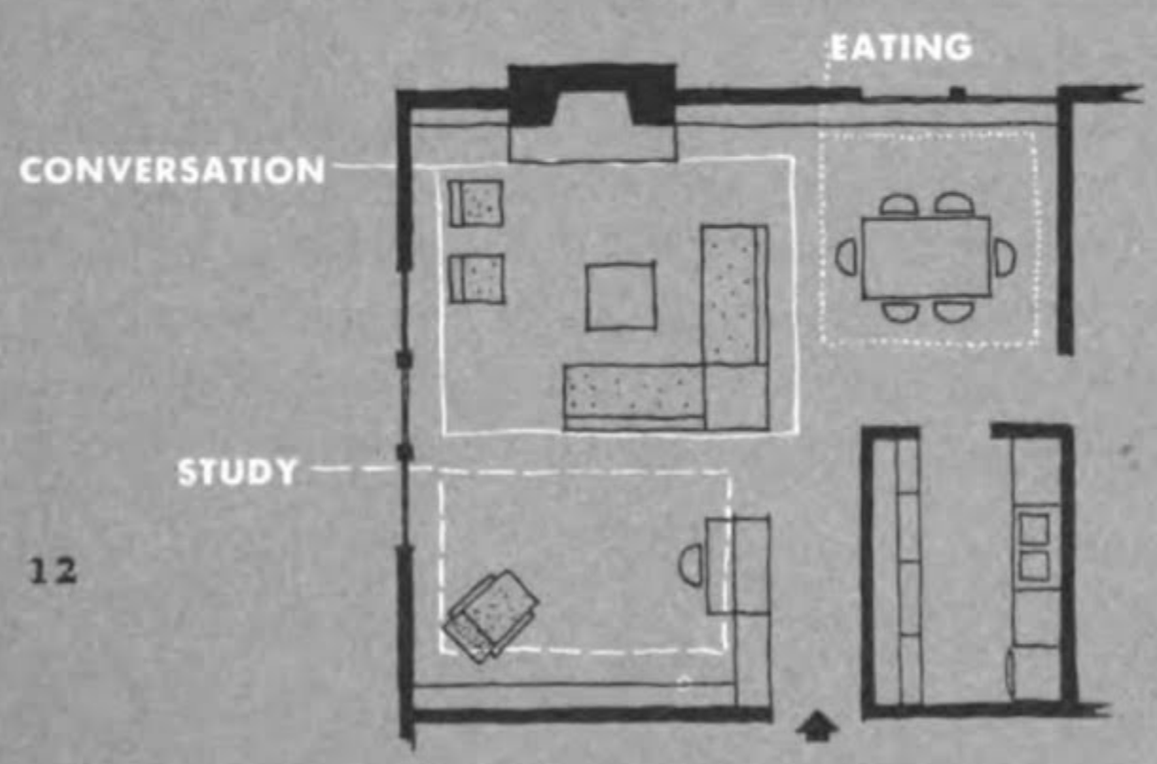
The Japanese living room is a model of planning: a bare room, into which you bring, from closets in the walls, the seats for people to sit on, the books for them to read, the paintings for them to enjoy. Though we are never likely to live like the Japanese, actually the idea makes sense for a room that must serve so many uses: uncluttered space, a few comfortable and easily moved seats, and the rest stored away in the walls to be brought out as needed.

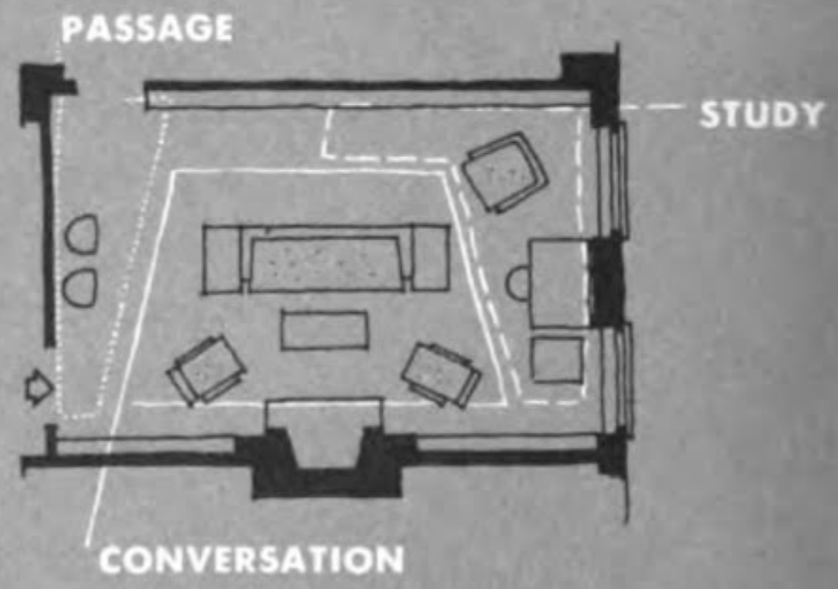
Planning the Living Room

1. There are two basic steps in planning your living room—or any room:

a. Decide what the uses of the room are to be.

Some kinds of work usually done during evening leisure hours may, particularly in a large family, overburden the living room, and are better done in other parts of the house if that is possible.





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Dressmaking can have a compact corner in the bedroom or laundry or kitchen, wherever there is space. A desk in the children's room is usually possible for homework, and in the master bedroom for letter writing; household accounts can be pigeonholed with menu-making in the kitchen. So, for the most part, we recommend removing from the living room all work—even leisure-hour work—and keeping it a room for recreation. Even so, we've left plenty of work for the living room to do!

b. Divide the space according to the furniture required for each activity.

This makes several rooms out of one. Use the furniture itself—the back of a sofa, a low bookcase, a desk, a library table—as the line of demarcation between the subsidiary living rooms. And in arranging them leave passageways, so that you don't have to track through one section to get to another. In this way steps and labor can often be saved in the use of the room and its care, and you gain comfort and convenience. If you spend an evening at canasta in the game corner, the rest of the room won't require an entire going-over the next morning.

Possible Groupings

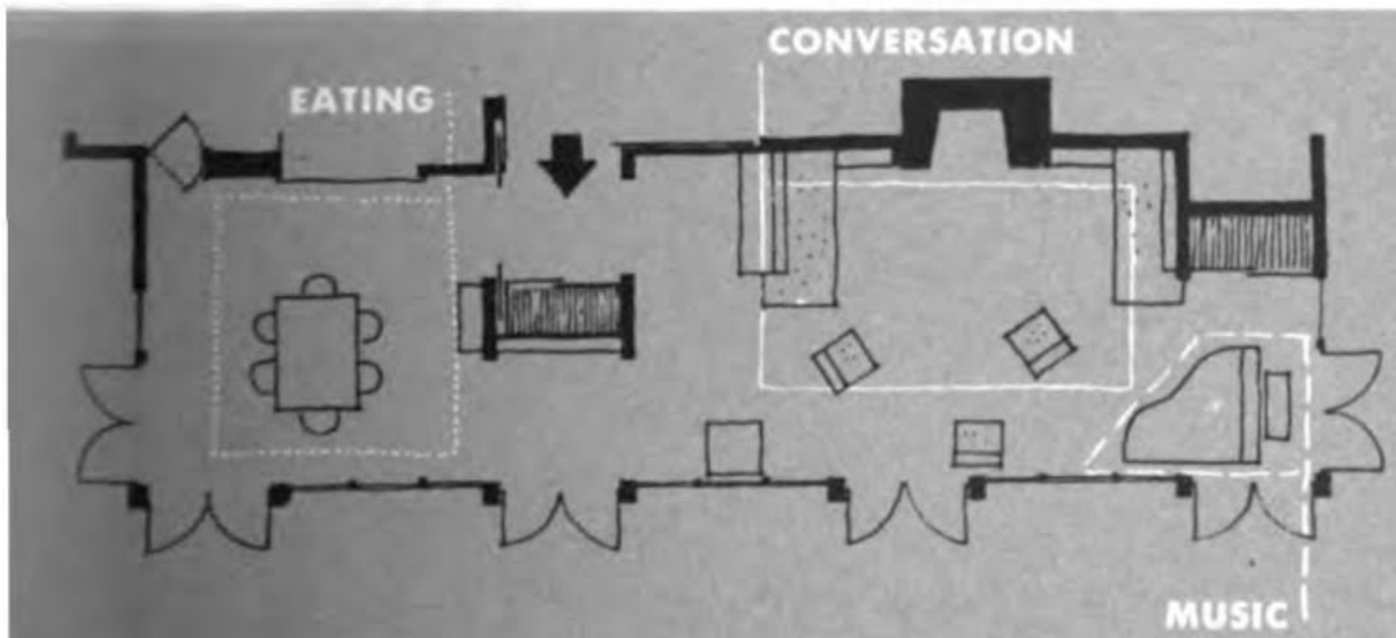
A conversation group, sofa and chairs arranged around the fireplace, if you have one.

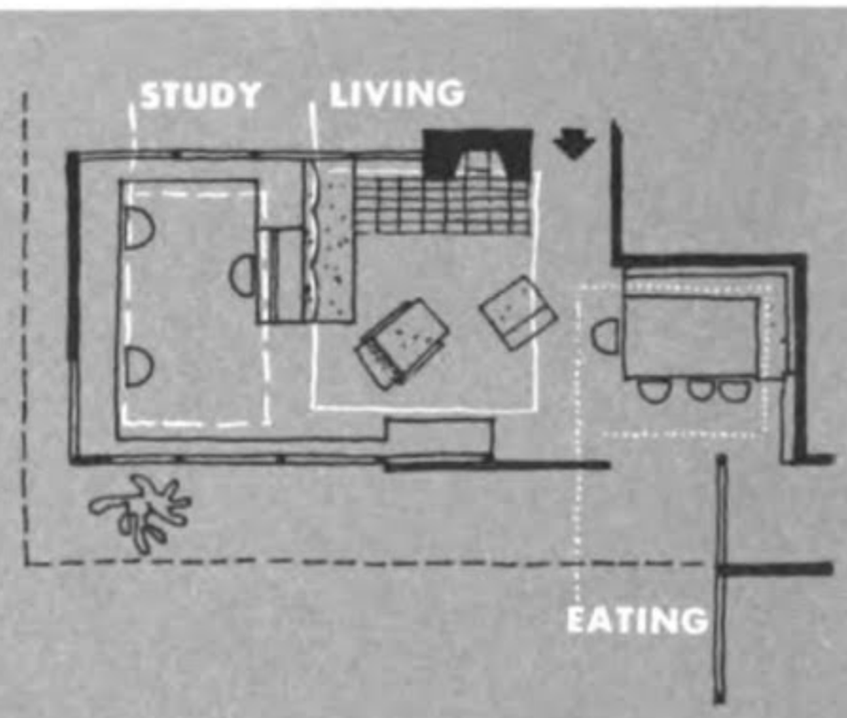
A music corner, radio-phonograph-television with record storage handy, and the seating so arranged that you can watch television or home movies with a minimum of chair-shifting.

A reading corner, away from the music and the talk, so the reader can be undisturbed: chair, good light, table or shelf for smoking things, book shelves and magazines.

A game corner, with chairs there or nearby, a permanent table or space to set a game up, good light, surface for smoking things. (If Father likes to work on his stamp albums or Mother on her darning with the family around, then this is the place for it.)

A dining area, one in the living room is often desirable; it saves an extra room and the care of it.





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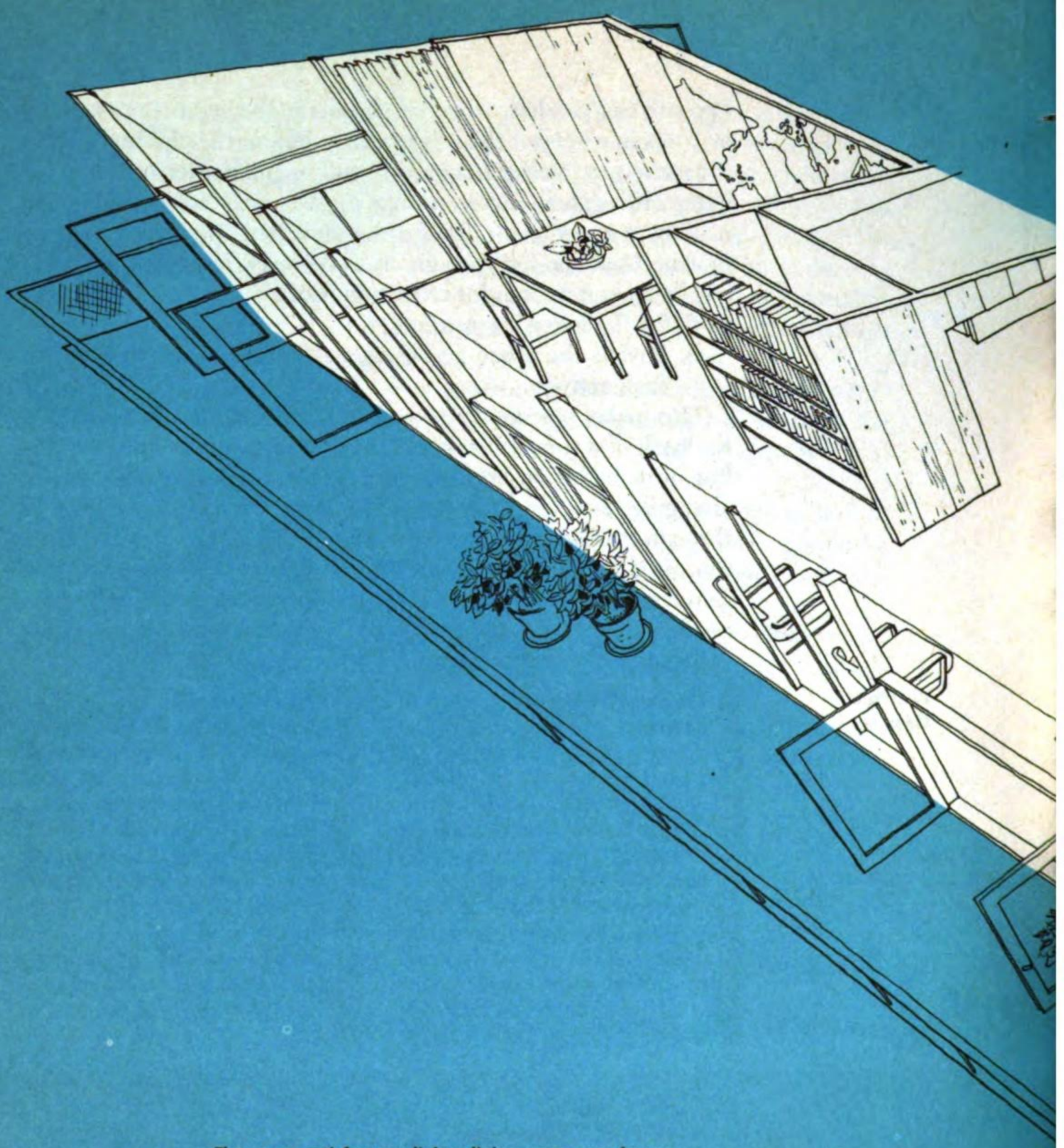

The most satisfactory living-dining room we know of, in a house in Berkeley, California, designed by architect Harwell Hamilton Harris. This room is a masterpiece of planning, with well-defined areas for entrance, conversation, music, and dining. Passage between areas is planned to avoid tracking through or disturbing them.

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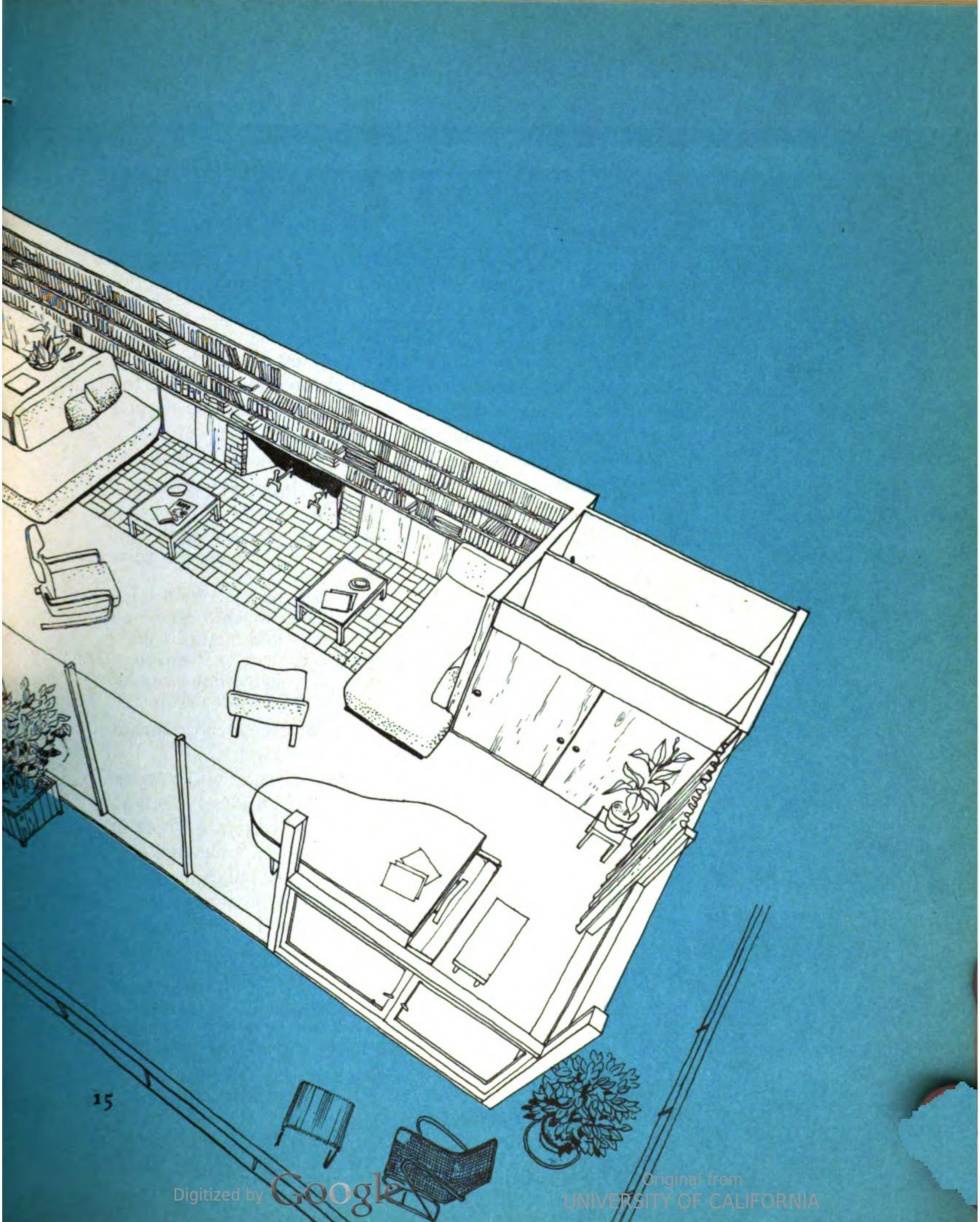

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Living Room Needs

floor that can be easily cleared for active recreation or a large party.
urniture that is sturdy as well as comfortable, and easily moved.
eady access to the kitchen for refreshments.
orage for games, smoking accessories, books and magazines, records, movie equipment, folding chairs and tables.
reas where direct lighting is preferable, as well as suitable; agreeable lighting throughout.

Those who are building or remodeling should also consider the placing of the living room in relation to exposure, privacy from the street, and access to the outdoors.

Floors and Walls

2. Ideally, the floor should be bare, with throw rugs in the seating areas. Large rugs and carpeting demand too much care, are too easily damaged, and make conversion of the room for dancing and parties a strenuous or impossible job.

Hardwood, the most familiar floor material, is good in the living room, but requires more maintenance than these newer ones:

New Floor Materials

tex-bonded terrazzo (1)*: small chips of marble or glass in a matrix of latex (neoprene rubber), resilient, most durable, least maintenance.
agnesite (3): magnesium oxychloride mixed with particles of hardwood, with a smooth surface, lightly mottled, which takes waxing but doesn't require it; comes in *any color*, resilient, very durable; the material used in subway car flooring.
ne new plastic tile flooring (4, 22), which requires no waxing (in a mottled color).
e Floor Chart for comparison of wear and maintenance of these and other materials.

To keep throw rugs from slipping, there are several standard devices (5) available.

Wall Storage: Particularly for the small-apartment dweller, invariably cramped for storage space, walls can serve an added function. Most of us have learned to keep books and records on built-in shelves. But we continue to use, for storage, end tables and consoles, secretary desks, large cabinets, and other bulky articles of furniture that actually have comparatively little storage space. These all add to the labor of dusting and furniture-shifting, and become loaded with accessories that must constantly be rear-

*This is the first of more than a hundred reference numbers to be found throughout the book. The numbers are keyed to Appendix B, which begins on page 194. It is a listing (with addresses) of manufacturers or distributors of the many new and comparatively hard-to-find products and materials we describe and recommend in these chapters.

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ranged, and offer constant danger of breakage. A great number of items—anything from linens to bridge tables—can and should be moved into the walls.

Living-room furniture usually represents the largest single portion of a family's furniture investment. Elimination of the more useless of these is likely to just about offset the cost of installing wall storage; and the saving in room space and in housework is enormous.

Types of Wall Storage

Carpenter-built into the wall according to your specifications, with hinged or sliding doors for access. This is the most satisfactory, also the most expensive. Not necessarily permanent; an architect can design it to be removable.

Factory-made wall storage units (6), fastened in place, from floor to ceiling. Not necessarily less expensive than the car-

Factory-made wall storage unit (6) can look like a built-in, made-to-order job. Remarkably complete and compact, it eliminates need for such articles of furniture as bookcases, desk, radio, music cabinet, china and linen cabinets—thus saving space and housework.

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penter-built; they can be removed when moving.

Homemade adjustable shelves; least expensive, but don't scorn them—they can be good looking. The smallest headache to an amateur carpenter is this method:

Put up store display keyhole brackets (7), from floor to ceiling, or bricks or cinder blocks. Buy shelving cut to length. Hang a blind of wood or bamboo slats or plastic-coated material, or a draw curtain of practical fabric harmonious with the room, or one that draws aside on tracks.

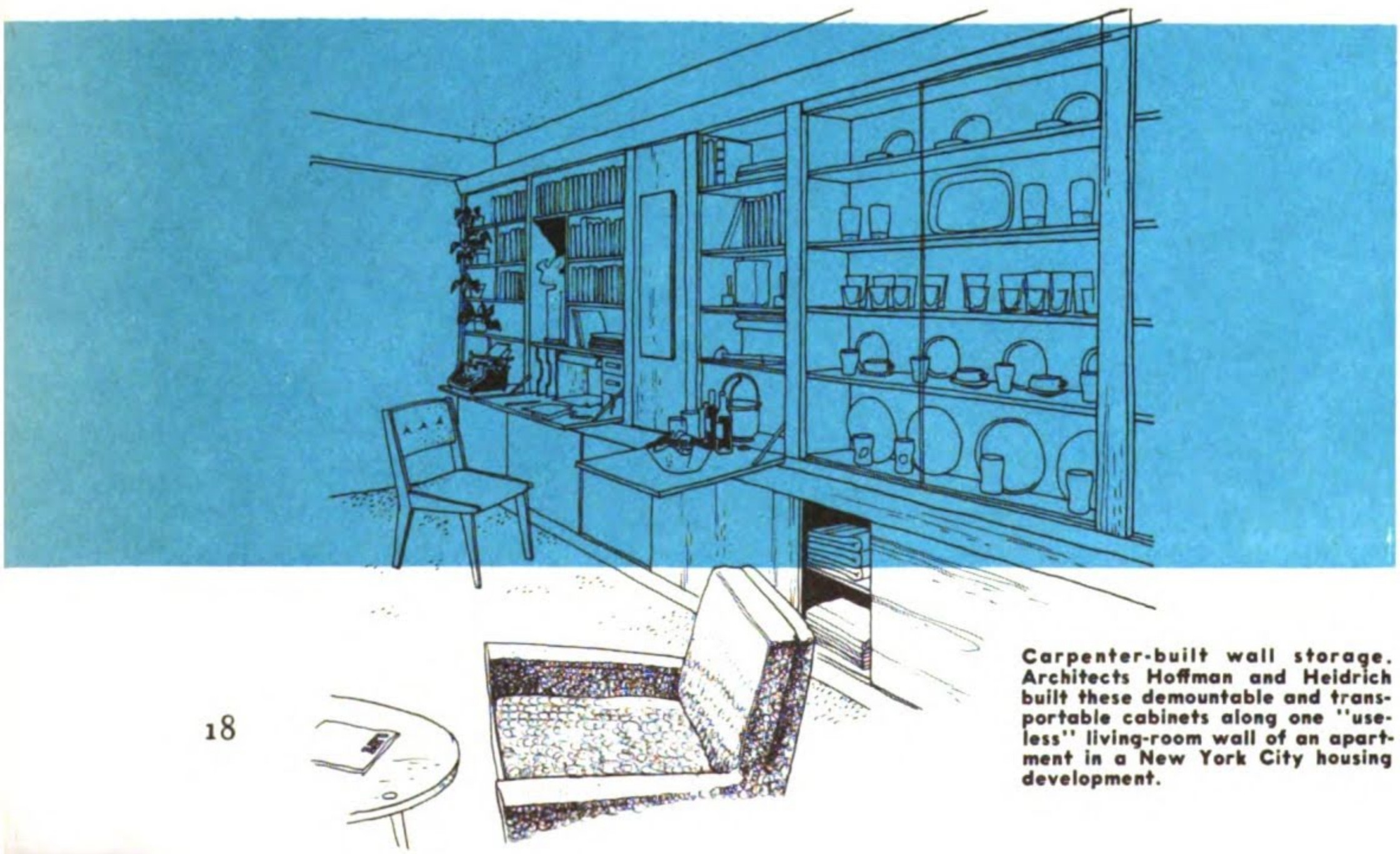
Consider Also These Work-savers

House books in glass-front shelves (8)—bought or built-in—and records in closed cabinets. The glass not only keeps books and shelves clean, but keeps the books in better condition.

Put sculpture, bric-a-brac and other decorative objects in a glass case set into the wall, or built out into the room, or under a glass table top; light them to show them off. But watch out for lighting too dramatic for an informal room.

Put compartmented trays (such as are used for table silver) of plastic or wood in drawers, to organize their contents.

Wall Finishes: With so many washable and waterproof ones available, there is no excuse for impractical wall coverings. Even a favorite wallpaper can usually be made washable with a coating of transparent lacquer (9)—but not lithographed papers, which are special, expensive types. See Wall Chart for maintenance ratings.



Carpenter-built wall storage. Architects Hoffman and Heidrich built these demountable and transportable cabinets along one "useless" living-room wall of an apartment in a New York City housing development.

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3. In our opinion, whatever decorative value portable table lamps and floor lamps may have cannot compensate for their capacity for creating housework and mischief. They fall or get knocked down, are unrivaled dust-catchers, and not only a nuisance but a hazard at cleaning time. Their wires snarl the furniture and trip the feet, their reflector globes are moth cemeteries and spider havens, their bases are soon scuffed; their shades soil, tear, and are always being tilted by someone who really needs light. Their spotty lighting, with sharp contrasts between bright and dark, is actually bad for the eyes. In general, we recommend built-in lighting.

For General Illumination, agreeable for talk, music, parties:

Light reflected against the ceiling, or against the wall if it illuminates a large surface; that is, cove or panel lighting.

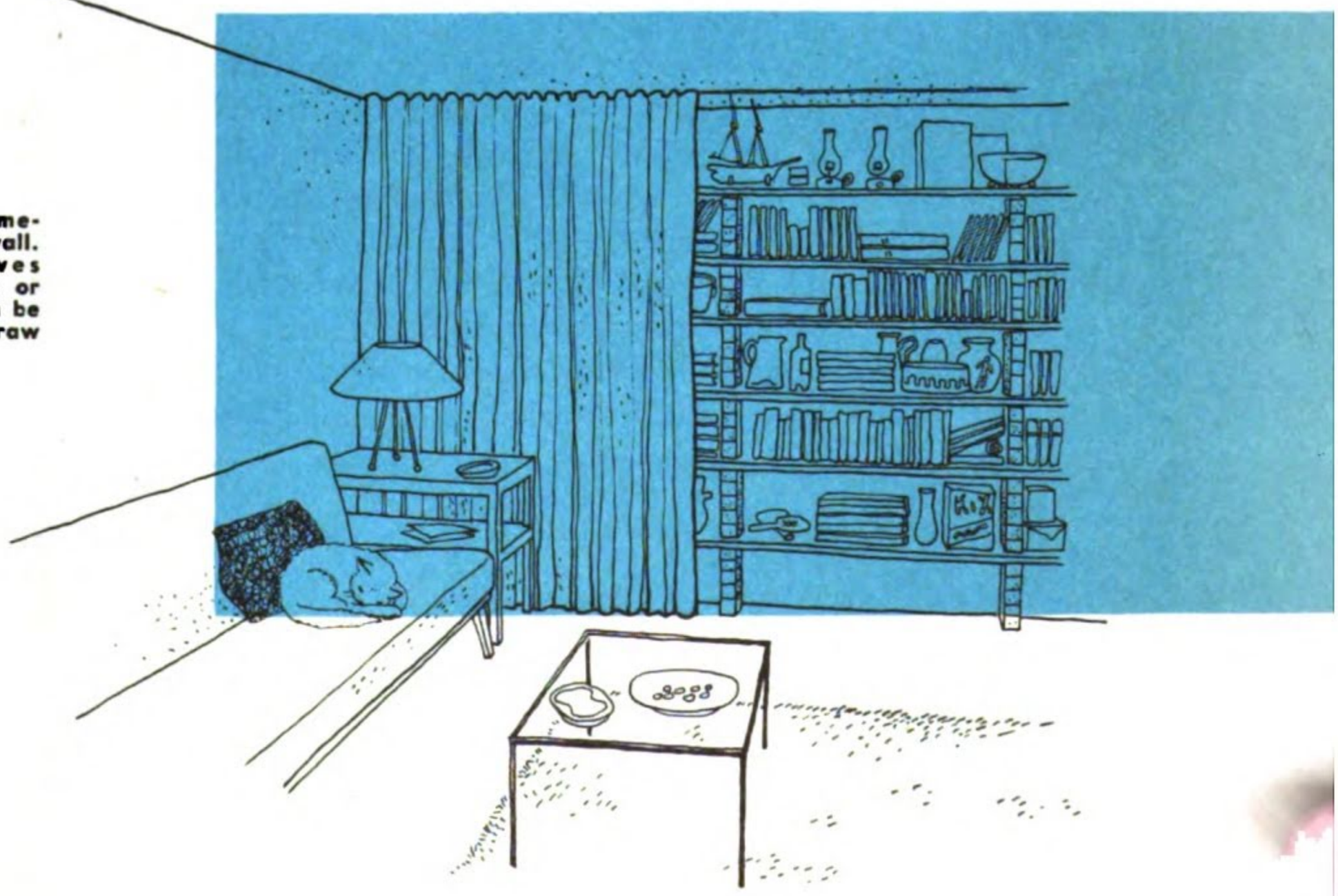
Light from simple, flat ceiling fixtures of the diffuse direct type.

A rheostat, a special type of switch for dimming, can be put on light circuits for varied degrees of light. Keep appliances such as radios and clocks on a separate circuit, however.

For Lighting Specific Areas use built-in devices:

A tubular light on the desk, over or inside the record cabinet, on the bookshelves, along the wall behind the sofa.

Pinpoint spots (15) in the ceiling, directed where needed.



Inexpensive, homemade storage wall. Wooden shelves placed on bricks or cinder blocks; can be concealed by a draw curtain.

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For Lamps, If You Must Have Them

Simple design; a column or shank without ornament, easy to clean with a few up-and-down strokes.

Stability; a wide enough, heavy enough base.

Chromium, or aluminum, brass, or copper with transparent lacquer *baked* on to prevent tarnish (unbaked lacquer has a much shorter life). To lacquer lamps you already own, clean first with carbon tetrachloride (cleaning fluid) or lacquer thinner, and brush on a clear lacquer recommended on the can for metal or spray on a plastic finish sold for tarnish prevention (16).

A reflector or a shade of simple shape and scrubbable material.

On a floor lamp, legs, not a solid base—easier to sweep under, and saving the base from kicks and scuffs.

If one is used for reading, be sure it can be adjusted, or is tall enough and with a shade wide enough to throw light where it is wanted. Many decorative table lamps make reading difficult.

For the Lamp Cord Hazard

Have many wall outlets, or a continuous strip of them (17).

Tack lamp cords against the baseboard, or where this is not possible, secure cord with small, inconspicuous hooks (like cup hooks) on the baseboard.

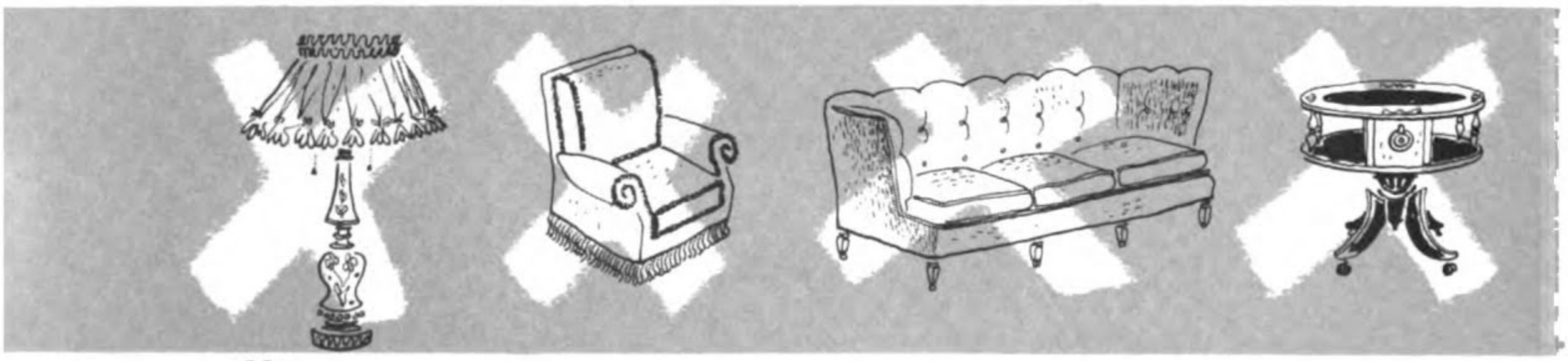
An inexpensive patented gadget (18), which works like a fisherman's reel, can be attached under some lamps to hold the cord taut.

Furnishing the Living Room

4. True comfort here means that you can put a drink down anywhere without hunting for a coaster, a foot down anywhere—even on the furniture—without feeling guilty. A cigarette fallen from an ashtray should not ruin a table, a rug, or a friendship. Admonitions never yet saved a chair arm from cracking or a table from being marred. How much better to have furniture that can take it!

Science and designing have provided such furnishings, much of it still high-priced, but rapidly becoming more reasonable. Our own living room has been so furnished for years; the saving in repairs, replacements, maintenance, and domestic tranquillity has been worth many times the original cost.

Upholstered Furniture: Caring for the conventional kind is one of the housewife's worst problems. Almost every day she plumps



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cushions, brushes fabric, dusts arms and legs. Periodically she vacuum-cleans or washes, polishes the wood, removes spots, puts slip covers on or takes them off. She must move heavy pieces to clean underneath. And many of them aren't even comfortable.

There is on the market a new type of upholstered furniture (19), which we think is the answer to many of these problems. The upholstery can be slipped off the furniture for dry cleaning or washing, and easily put back in place. Also, for more comfort and durability, and less care:

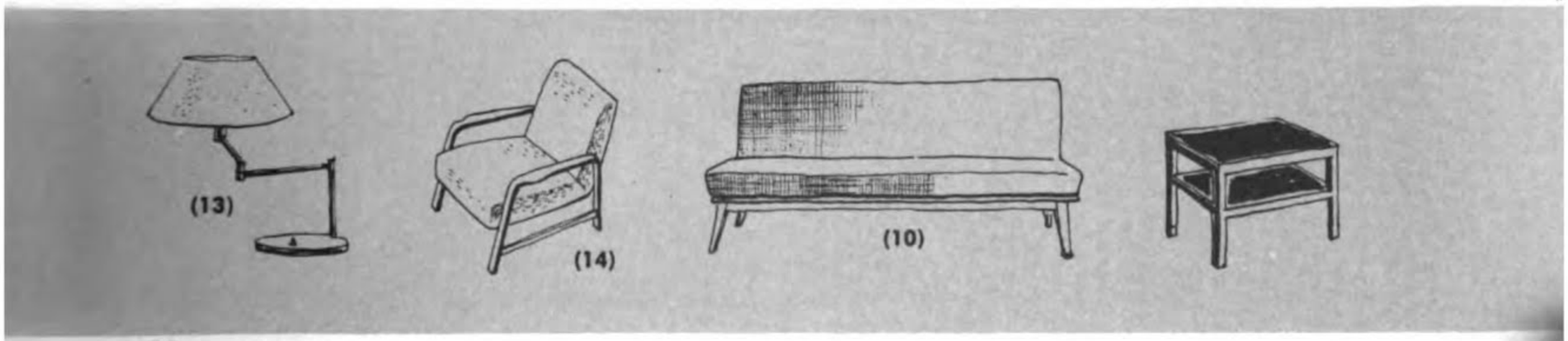
"Tight" seats, eliminating loose cushions, are easier to care for and sometimes even more comfortable than some overstuffed types.

Contour design (molded plywood is one type), simplifies cleaning. Seating of this type, if well designed, is comfortable enough for use as side chairs and desk chairs, though not for lounging.

But where you do have conventional furniture, in general we consider upholstery in a really practical fabric much less trouble than the additional use of slip covers, which are more difficult to brush or vacuum, and require constant adjusting and handling—which means more frequent washing or cleaning. But of course long-wearing upholstery costs a good deal more.

Choice of fabric is the key to work-saving, and it involves both the type of material selected and its weave, construction, and finish.

Durability: This is one important consideration, and it is largely a matter of weave. Chairs and sofas are subject to much wear and tear, so don't try to economize with sleazy, thin, or loosely woven fabrics; select tightly woven, heavy, abuse-proof material. Also be sure the colors are guaranteed "fast"—if this isn't stated on the label, consult the DuPont booklet, *Testing for Colorfastness in the Home* (20). Slip-cover fabric should be washable, and upholstery fabric safe in the cleaner's hands. All materials should be amenable to home spot-and-stain removal. Water-repellent fabrics are recommended, too; these are not generally designed specifically



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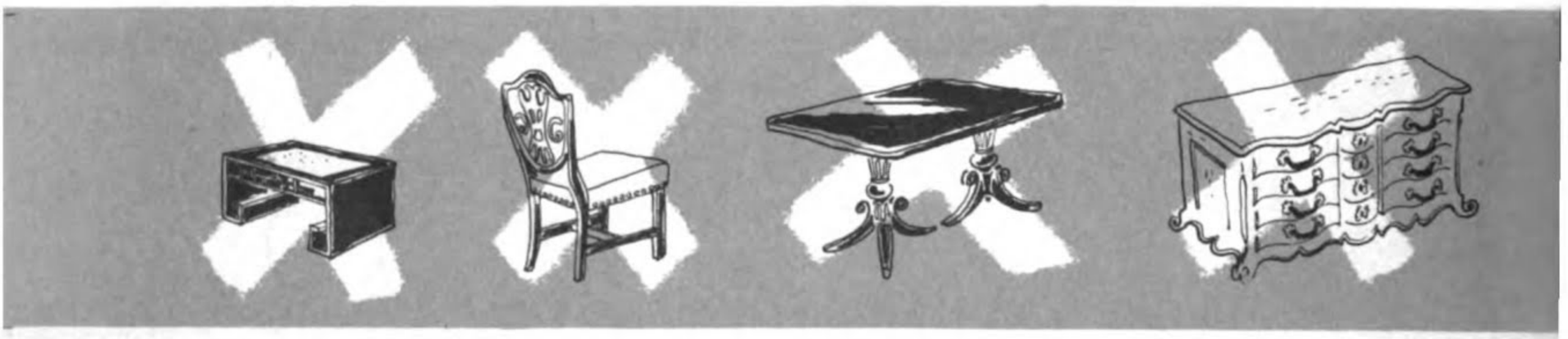
for indoor upholstery, but water-repellent rain wear and outdoor upholstery materials can be adapted for such use.

"Soilability": This is by far the most important factor. One approach to this problem is *camouflage*, achieved by choosing variegated colors in the weave or by printed patterns, avoiding plain, solid colors. But the basic solution is *selection of the proper type of material*. The very new woven plastics (now used as automobile upholstery) can create the illusion of wool or cotton fabric, with much less dust-catching and spotting. As yet, they are available only in Saran (21), but more attractive variations, combining Saran with other yarns, will probably soon be obtainable.

Plastic-coated fabrics (22) are excellent, too; and another new development is plastic film, in textures that are a direct imitation of fabric (23). These are more comfortable than smooth, nonporous plastic materials, but take longer to clean—a scrubbing brush must be used to remove dirt from the depressions in them. Other plastics, imitation leather, and leather can all be wiped off quickly with a sponge and a mild detergent. Plastic webbing is another possibility. Its two advantages are that it's easily cleaned with a sponge or cloth, and that single strips can be replaced individually, without going to the expense of a complete upholstery job.

The most common upholstery and slip-cover materials are of woven cotton, which we have found the most easily soiled yarn—unless it's processed with a water-repellent finish (24). Fabrics containing rayon, wool, and mohair yarns—alone or combined with cotton—are somewhat less impractical, being more dirt-resistant and easier to spot-clean and vacuum.

Nubby, highly textured and pile fabrics (if they're strong, tightly woven, and in good camouflage colors or pattern) can be considered practical only if you have a vacuum cleaner to suck out the dirt; they catch and hold much more dirt than flat-woven fabrics.



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Furniture Frames

Wrought iron frames —especially in black— will not show rough treatment and, therefore, require much less care than wood. Avoid light colors, brass trim, and curlicues; ask for guarantee against rust unless you don't mind annual repainting.

Solid wood is better than veneered, though it adds weight compared with aluminum. Medium-colored woods like cherry, walnut, gum, need less care than blond; get natural finish, not stained or bleached.

Lacquered aluminum is easily cared for until the lacquer wears off in spots, causing grayish discoloration; you must remove old lacquer, repolish, and relacquer. Anodized aluminum is expensive, but will last for years and never rust. Lighter, easier to move than heavy wood frames.

Chromium-plated steel stays shiny for years, is easily cleaned, but eventually rusts, and the piece must be taken apart for replating. A coat of clear lacquer (9) will make it last longer before rusting.

Unless you happen to think them worth the great amount of extra work and caring for they involve, *avoid:* deeply carved wooden chairs—dust collects in the cracks—and sled legs (horizontal bars at floor level, often found on chairs of modern design)—they are clumsy and scuff very easily.

The usual furniture-top factory finish of rubbed lacquer is ruined by a drop of water. We suggest:

Table Surfaces; Furniture Tops

Ordinary plate glass, cut to size by your local glazier, to cover; better but more expensive is tempered glass (25), which will not break.

Spar varnish (26) or marble floor varnish (26); withstand alcohol and water, though not lighted cigarettes.

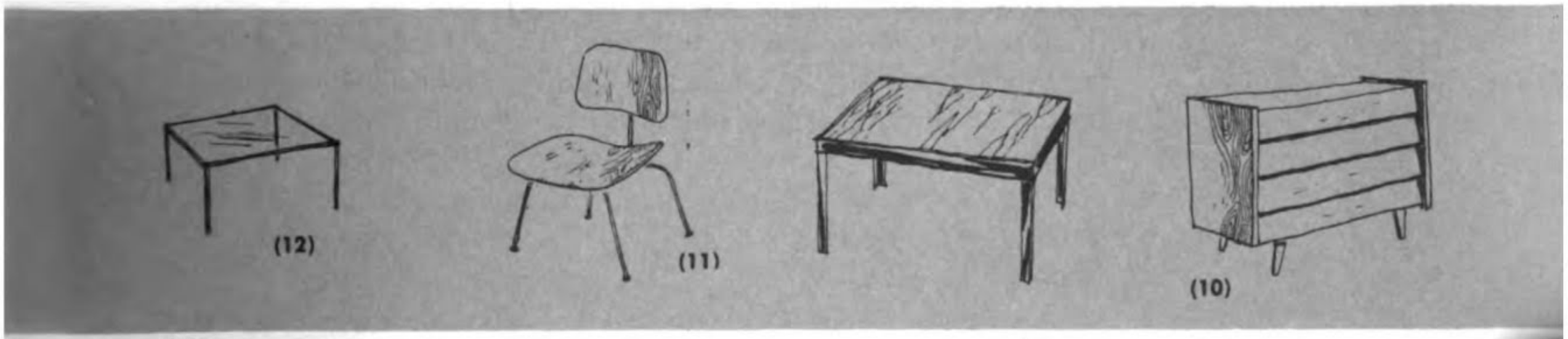
Cigarette-proof thermosetting panels – Formica (27), and Micarta (28) are brand names —can be applied to your table top by a cabinetmaker in his shop. Veneered Micarta – called "true wood" – is available in walnut, mahogany, Prima Vera, korina, and oak.

A table top made entirely of glass toughened by new processes (25) is handsome and practical, resisting almost any damage. Disadvantage is its weight.

Hard marble, slate, tile, have the same pros and cons as glass.

Porcelain-enameled steel, laminated on pressed fiber panels (29) can be bought and applied to the top of your table.

Metals show scratches, and some metals tarnish. Not recommended.



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The Table-top Chart rates these and other materials and finishes. But if you find a material with a permanent finish too expensive, at least provide lots of ashtrays for your tables, *deep* enough to prevent spill-over and burning, and a full supply of coasters, too.

Casters, rollers, domes: Put them on all possible articles of furniture, even including wall pieces, for maximum movability. Furniture can then be easily shifted for cleanup and at parties. Saves not only backaches, but wear and tear on floor coverings as well. (Caster brakes are available, to keep furniture stationary.)

Much of the work of lugging chairs for television-viewing can be avoided if you use either the new swiveling television type, or chairs with large casters on the bottom. We know one household where secondhand swiveling office chairs were upholstered attractively for this purpose.

More-Than-One Living Room

5. Up to now we have been discussing the single all-purpose living room. But even with the best of planning, the living room is often overburdened. So, where space and budget permit, auxiliary living areas often spring up: a daytime living room and playroom for a mother and children in a sunny modern laundry; a leisure area in the bedroom; hobby rooms of all sorts in attics, basements, garages, or any unused space.

If two living areas are possible, here is one way to divide their functions:

A Quiet (Old Folks at Home) Room, where such sedentary pleasures as books, music, conversation, and bridge may be peacefully enjoyed. Less space than one all-purpose living room, and no need to clear the floor; here, if anywhere, wall-to-wall carpeting.

An Active Room. In planning this, think of a gymnasium: lightweight furniture, and a minimum of it, or folding furniture which can even be hung on the wall; wall storage where everything, even the ping-pong table, can be put away. A superhard, supersmooth floor: a bowling-alley floor, which is hardwood with an almost indestructible varnish (30); or terrazzo or magnesite (see the Floor Chart).

Some of the best subsidiary living areas are *outdoors*, on porch, terrace, or lawn. This is a story by itself, which you'll find in Chapter VI.

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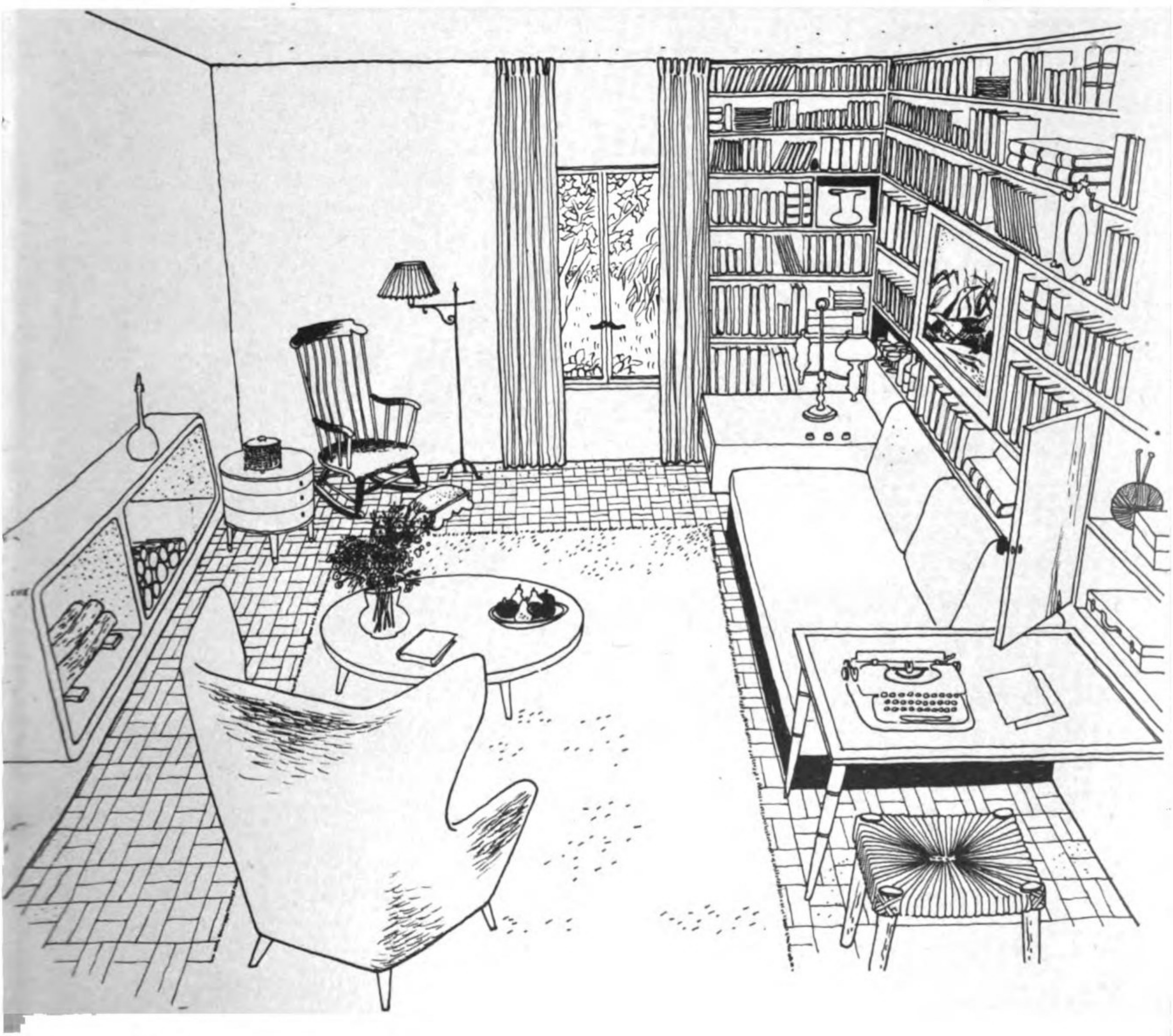
A "Quiet Room." With brick floor, rug in the seating area only, knee-high Bermuda fireplace to avoid stooping, this is planned and furnished for passive uses.



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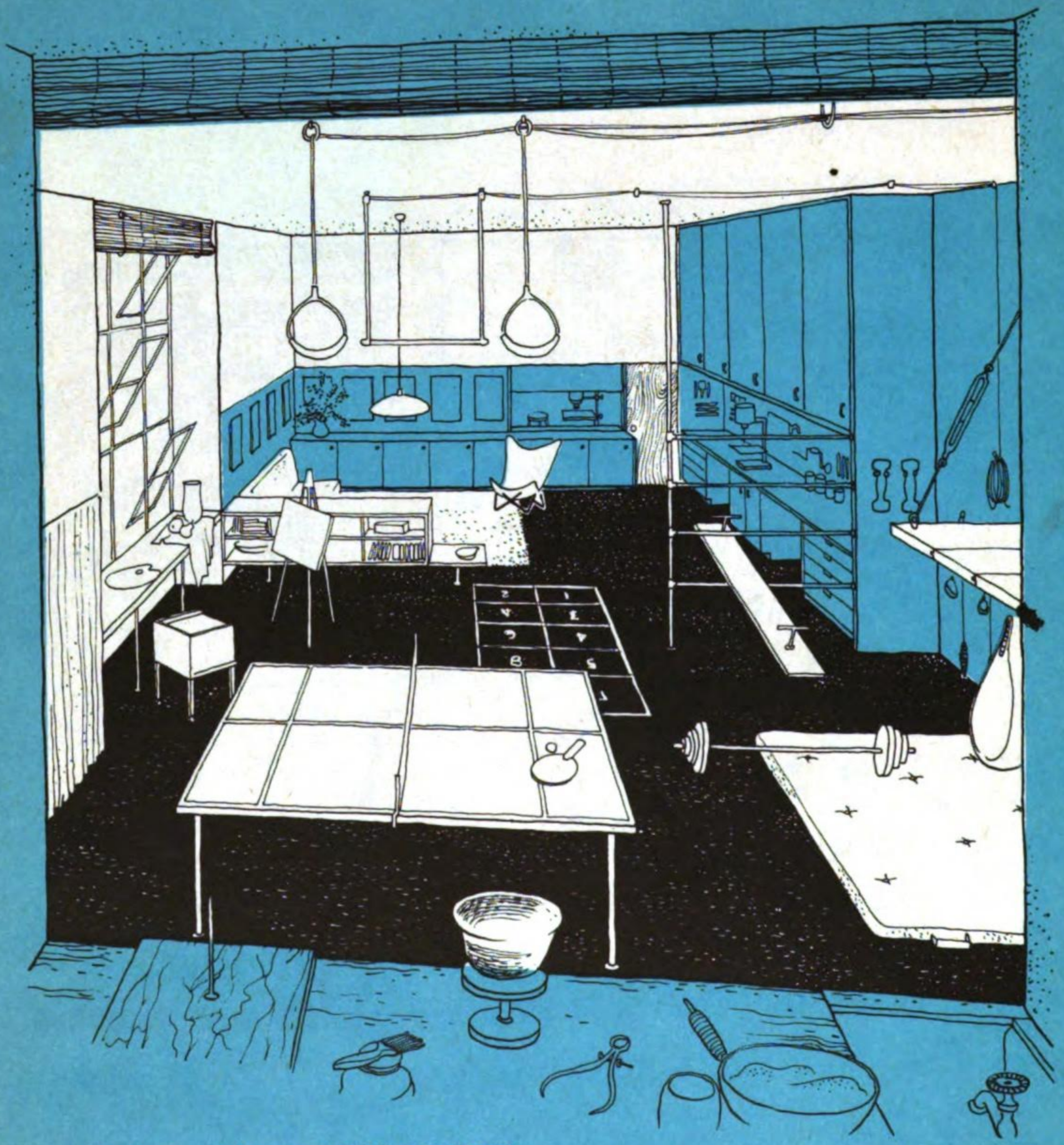

An "Active Room." For as many of the more strenuous leisure activities as the family desires—a room that can have real warmth and life. There's a gymnasium in the corner of this room, and provision for ping-pong, shuffleboard, photography, carpentry, pattern-making, painting; plus a lounging and drinking area.

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Fireplaces

6. Fireplaces make work, but most people find that the pleasure they give outweighs the nuisance. Decrease the labor involved by measures like these:

lose off the flue when the fireplace is not in use. You'll want a damper you can easily reach: an extension on the inside damper handle, or a crank on the outside, a patented device that can be built in (more expensive).

stead of a separate fire screen, have a mesh curtain that draws across the opening (31), another patented device.

ring in the fuel in a solid-bottom or lined carrier, of ample size and with a cover.

ave the woodbox big enough to cut down refilling trips.

ave the woodbox open from the front rather than the top, for easier access to the wood, for cleaning, and so you won't have to remove vases, ashtrays, books, each time you open it.

ake sure the fireplace is built to draw. This is pure engineering; have a contractor with a reputation for successful jobs. There are also prefabricated metal linings for fireplaces (32) with directions for their installation, which are built to give proper draft plus heat circulation.

ay a masonry hearth the full width of the fireplace and at least 2 feet into the room.

rame the fireplace in a fireproof and easy-to-scrub wall area at least 1 foot wide on each side and 30 inches above. Glazed tile or glass is good; unglazed brick and cement are too porous.

uild in a fire screen like a double-hung window, which will slide up into the front wall of the chimney. This must be custom-built.

ave a trapdoor in the fireplace floor to drop ashes into a container in the basement. Fireplace builders know how to do this.

uild the woodbox into the wall with an opening to the outdoors through which the box can be filled; thus fuel isn't carried through the house.

ut down on kneeling and stooping with a fireplace built knee-high—this is called a Bermuda fireplace.

A fireplace is a pretty dead symbol of warmth and hospitality if it isn't used and enjoyed. Avoid the foolish tendency to make it nothing more than a permanent exhibit—surrounded by such impractical paraphernalia as petit-point fire screens and over-decorated, polished-brass hardware.

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CHAPTER III

THE VANISHING DINING ROOM

We deplore the passing of the American farm kitchen, with its massive dining table in the center. This is not mere sentimentality. That big table was the logical place for the family to dine. The hot biscuits were really hot out of the oven, the second helpings kept warm on the back of the stove, and Mother did not waste a step in setting, serving, or clearing.

Today, we do seem to be coming around again to the conclusion that a room used only for dining is a waste of space, steps, and labor. The dining room is already becoming extinct. You are not surprised at its absence in a modern city apartment or a new house. It has been replaced by a number of arrangements—by a dining area in the living room, or perhaps by a dining foyer, or by a dining alcove in the kitchen or separated from it only by a pass-through counter.

Thoughtful architects are murmuring against the "efficiency-size" kitchen in which there is no room for a table. The American family for which they design a home today is usually one in which the woman does her own work, and where is the efficiency of a kitchen that isolates her from the family group and costs her many wasted steps daily in the serving of meals? We actually conceive of the kitchen not only as the place to dine, but as the center of family living.

If you live in an old house and are cursed, as you think, with a big kitchen, or if you are rebuilding or remodeling and in danger of shrinking your kitchen to a size that forever exiles the dinner table, consider the case for the Dining-Kitchen in a later section of this chapter.

But wherever your dining area may be, there are basic ways to plan, furnish, and use it which can cut the work pertaining to meals to a minimum and increase their enjoyment proportionately.

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Planning the Dining Area

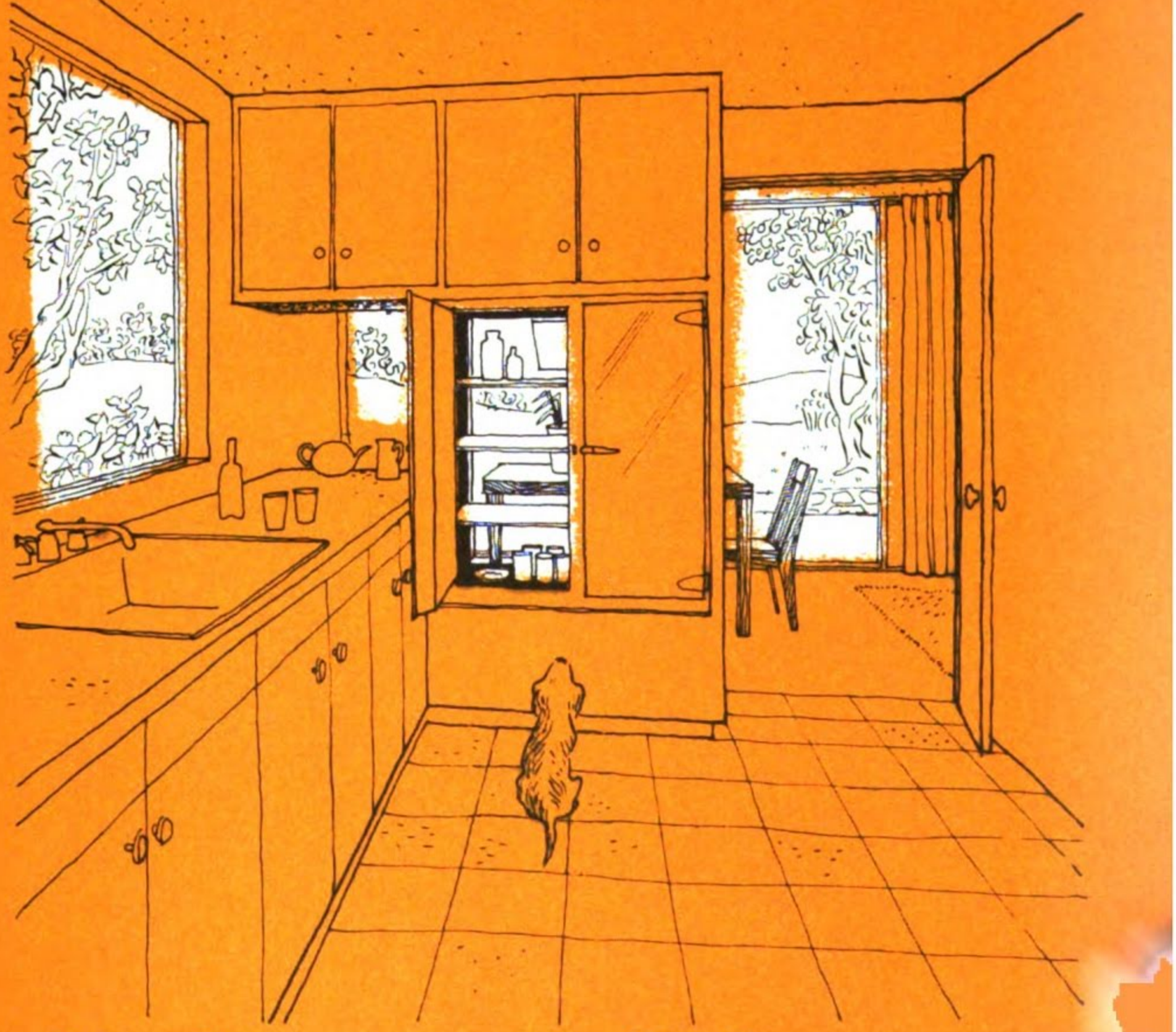
1. We are solely concerned here with ease in setting, serving, and clearing away meals. If your dining area is not in the kitchen, but adjoins it, you can save much time by altering the wall or partition that separates the two areas. (Since this wall is very seldom a bearing wall, or one that actually supports the ceiling, parts of it can usually be cut away, and without much expense. But consult a builder first.)

Open-Wall Ideas

Have a counter that opens through the wall or across the partition. Pass the dinnerware through in serving, back for washing. Have the counter stainproof and heat-resistant (see Table-top Chart).

Flanking the counter, and above and below it, have shelves that open through into both kitchen and the dining area, and drawers that slide in both directions. Keep silver, everyday china and glasses, serving

Save time by using a double-door refrigerator (34) opening in both kitchen and dining area, and a pass-through opening to the sink center.



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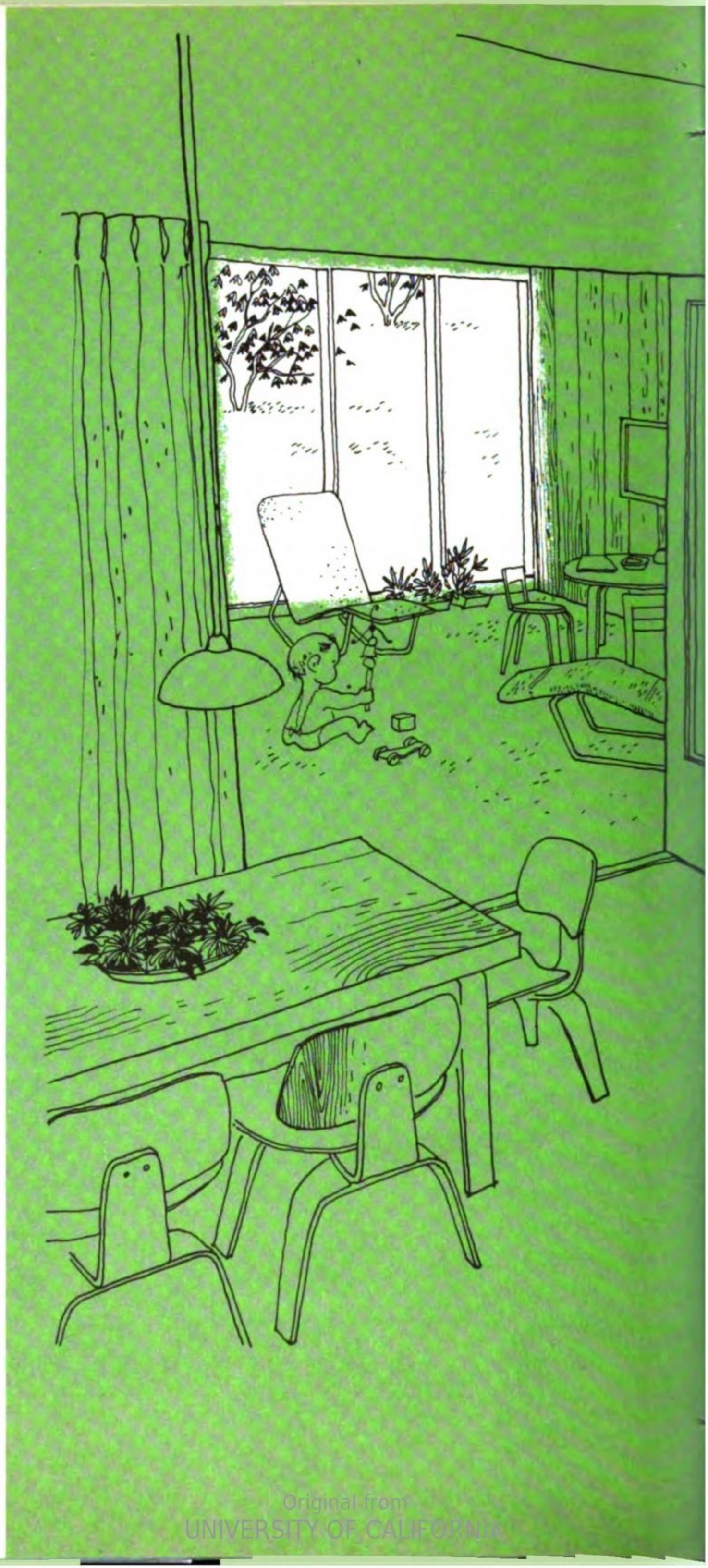
dishes, platters, and trays here, so that pieces can be returned to their places after washing, and removed on the dining-area side when they're to be used at table. Store trays vertically, file-cabinet style; platters the same way or on thin shelves, not stacked.

Store linens in cupboards below the counter and shelves. (See suggestions for kitchen storage, Chapter VII, pages 127-129.)

Place the refrigerator in the partition, with doors opening both front and back. This can be custom-made for you, at a price, by a restaurant supply house or a commercial refrigeration equipment company, which can be found in most large cities.

Below the pass-through counter have double doors – like the lower half of Dutch doors (these can be either sliding or hinged). Then a dining table, on casters, can be set in the kitchen, *passed through* for dining, and back for clearing.



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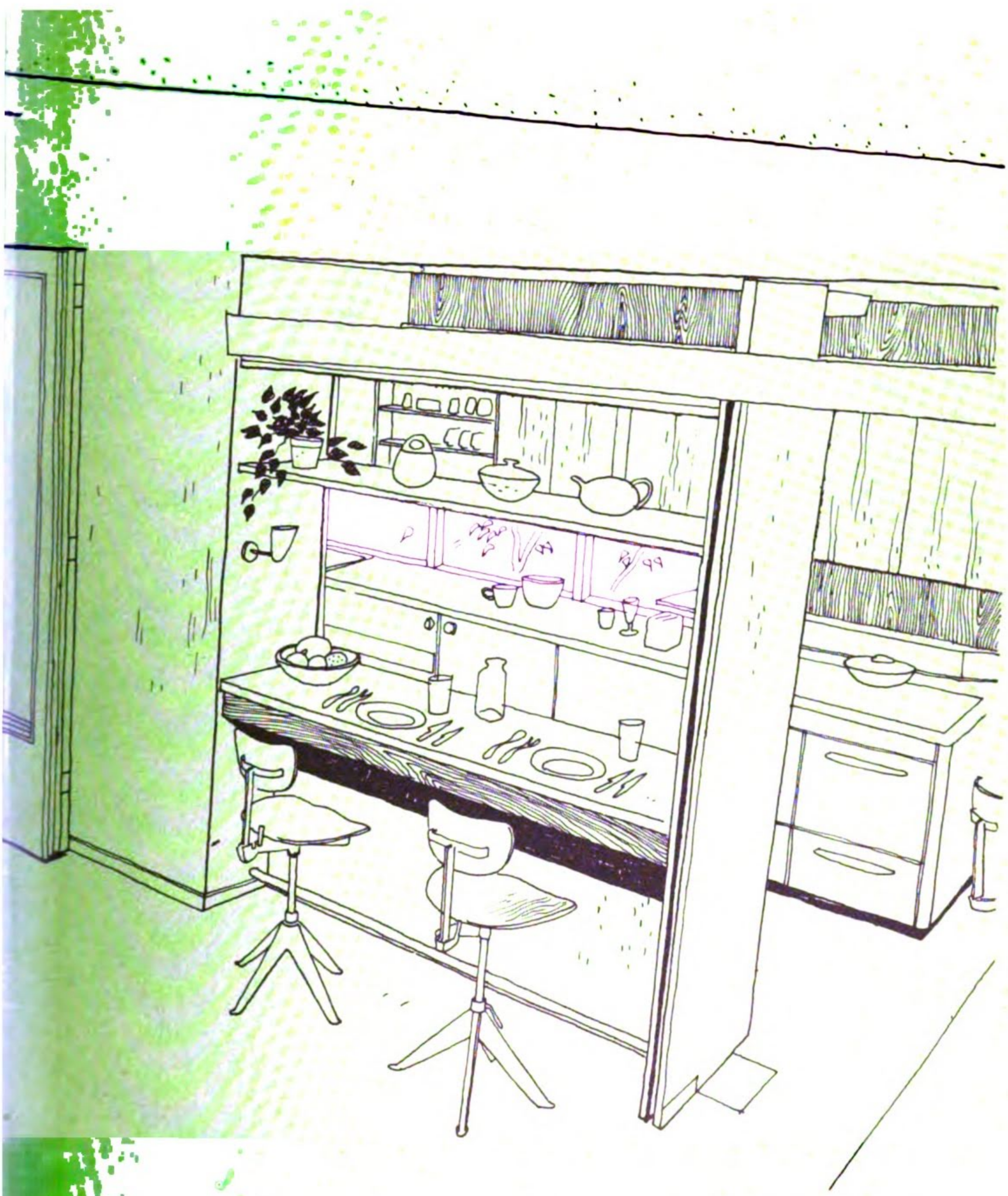

Pass-through partition between kitchen and dining area. This can also be used as a bar for breakfast, snacks, children's meals; for serving at cocktail parties and buffet meals *(Idea House II, Walker Art Center).*

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If your dining area cannot be placed in the kitchen or next to it, you can still use a counter arrangement for serving. This can be either a shelf built onto the wall or a piece of furniture—a bookcase or a buffet; you can also use a cart or large trays. Table linens can be stored in this dining area, but it wastes time to keep china, silver, and glassware elsewhere than in the kitchen.

Floors, Walls, and Windows

2. For a space where chairs are forever being moved and traffic is heavy, where crumbs must fall and food may spatter, easy cleaning is as important as good looks.

A rug or carpet on the floor here is really absurd. A smooth surface, easily washed, stain-resistant, and needing little care is what you want.

Floor

Terrazzo (1), cement or rubber bonded, meets all these specifications and is very durable.

Fieldstone, glazed brick, and ceramic tile are long-wearing but, with rougher surface and masonry joints, less easy to clean.

Linoleum, asphalt tile (if of the greaseproof type), in mottled and medium-dark colors, are clean and resilient to walk on, but need more scrubbing and must be waxed. Have them laid with cove corners and curved baseboard to eliminate the crack between floor edge and wall.

Plastic floor tile; seldom has to be waxed (22).

Cork makes a handsome, nearly noiseless floor, especially good in a living-room dining area, but has some maintenance as well as pretty high initial cost. Not recommended for kitchens.

Hardwood, the most familiar material, is good if it has a resistant finish like spar varnish, not a polished wax finish, which even water spots. Also not suited for kitchens.

See the Floor Chart for comparisons of these and other floors.

Walls should be really washable, and resistant to food spatters, grease stains, and furniture scuffing.

Walls

High-gloss enamel paints of either alkyd resin (26) or oil base are the only easily washable paints. Diluting or dulling them reduces their washability. Flat paints of all kinds are altogether impractical.

Plastic and coated wallpapers are washable; there are many on the market.

Plywood paneling, very handsome, is coming within reach of a modest budget.

More information on these and other wall coverings in the Wall Chart.

If privacy is needed or the room is too sunny, we suggest for your windows:

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Windows

oller blinds in translucent or plastic-coated fabrics.
amboo or wood shades or drapes.
raperies, or glass curtains of plastic film or coated fabrics that are easily washed down.
Look for pleasing colors on the dark rather than the light side, or allover patterns.
or other window coverings and for efficient drapery hardware, see Chapter V, pages 99, 103.

Furniture

3. Furniture takes more punishment in the dining area than anywhere else in the house, and should be sturdy.

Get a table that stands firm and steady without cross-bracing, which the family feet would inevitably scuff. Put the right casters on it to make it easily movable for cleaning (see the Caster Chart for the kind that suit your floor) and caster brakes on two diagonally opposite legs to hold it still while in use.

A table top that is stainproof and heat-resistant really saves work. It eliminates table linens; but if you are addicted to these, it still cuts down most of the table-polishing. Hard marble or tempered glass are very practical surfaces.

Table Tops

henolic thermosetting laminated plastic – forget that jawbreaker and ask for Formica (27), Micarta (28), Textolite, SatUSPly. The first three come in both cigarette-proof and standard form, the former more expensive. Cigarettes will burn the standard form but the mark is not apt to show on medium or dark colors.
See Table-top Chart for others.

Seats should be robust ones with strong joints and plenty of bracing, but lightweight. You should be able to lift and move a dining chair with one hand. For this reason benches are not recommended unless they are built in.

Seats

luminum chairs can be sturdy though feather-light. But avoid sled legs on metal chairs—they scuff too easily.
Upholstery is not essential to comfort and good looks; careful proportioning and contour modeling make some unupholstered chairs handsomer, and equally comfortable.
If you must have them upholstered, use stain-resistant fabric that can be scrubbed, like supported plastic (23); plastic-coated (22); or plastic-woven (21) fabrics.

Lighting

4. This should be from directly above the table. Side lights are more work to care for and indirect lighting is wasted: all you need during meals is to spotlight the table.

A flush ceiling fixture or one set against the ceiling exposes the least surface to dust.
A hanging fixture should not be merely decorative, but also easy to clean and to refill, so

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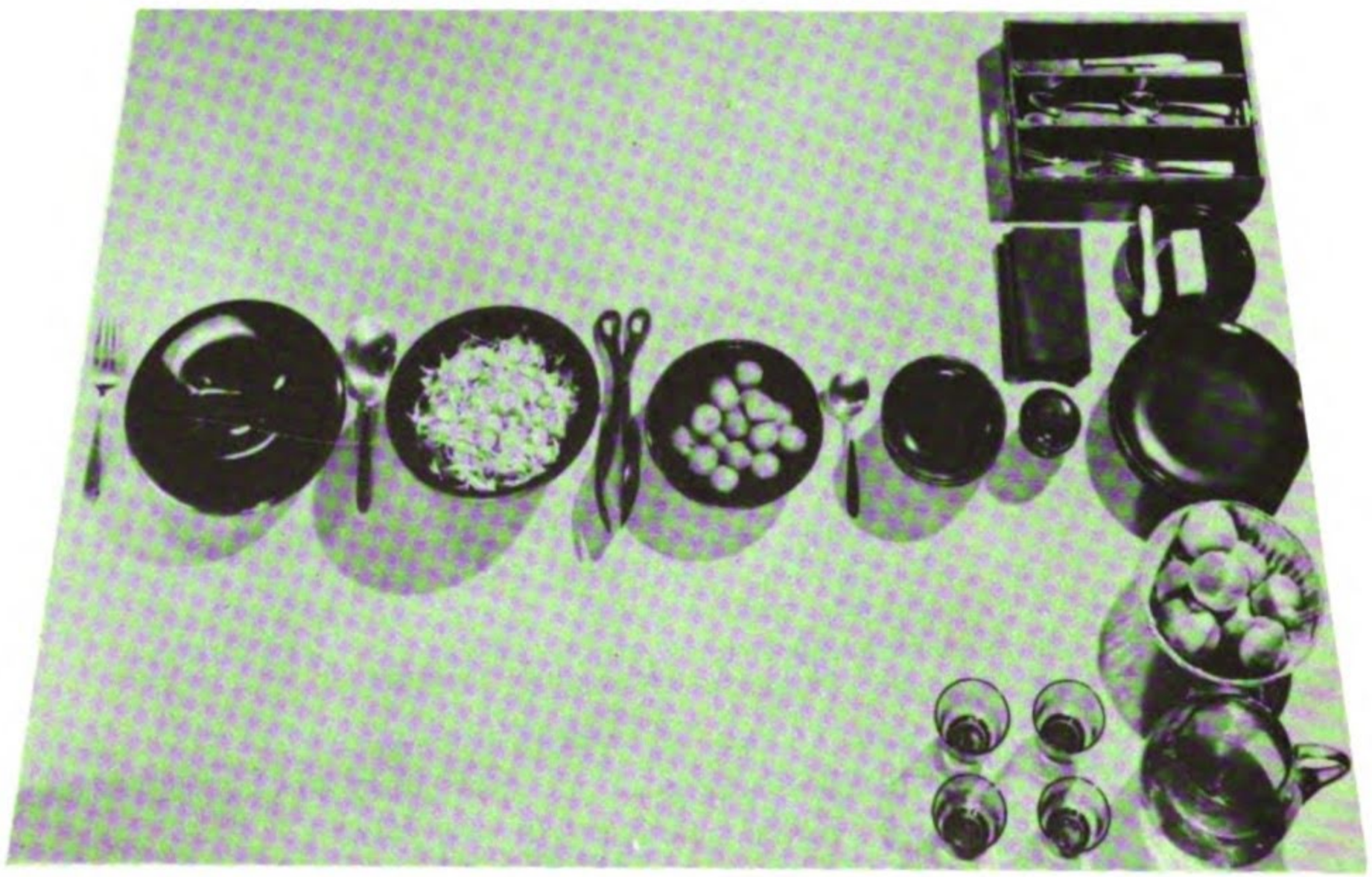
hang it low, or have it on a cord for easy raising and lowering. A pinhole spotlight (15), set in the ceiling, for the living-dining room; no fixture visible to call attention to the dining area when it is not in use, and perfect lighting when it is. A construction job and more expensive.

Table Service

5. Here is where the work budget can really be slashed. Serving a meal occurs roughly a thousand times a year in the American home. For one sample meal served in the conventional way—a family dinner for four—we counted the number of separate pieces carried to the table: there were 82.

The menu was soup, roast, mashed potatoes, one vegetable, gravy, salad, gingerbread with whipped cream; there were no guests, no cocktails or wine. Here is the list, and beside it our Family Cafeteria Dinner setting, which slices the number of pieces by more than half. Our meal differs from the conventional one in menu as well: by using a casserole dish (ideal as a one-dish main course for both family and company dinners) plus salad, with fruit for dessert, several additional pieces of tableware are eliminated.



Family Cafeteria setting. The meal is arranged in a T-shape, on a spar-varnished table top. Across the bar of the T: cutlery, plates, rolls, butter, water pitcher and glasses, so that each diner can help himself as he moves along before taking his seat at the table. The leg of the T contains the one-dish main course (in the piece in which it was prepared), salad bowl, dessert (in its dish), and serving utensils—35 pieces instead of the 82 of the traditional setting.

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Table Settings

Conventional Setting	Family Cafeteria Setting
1 tablecloth	——
4 fabric napkins	4 paper napkins
4 dinner plates	4 dinner plates
4 soup plates	——
4 salad plates	1 wooden salad bowl
4 bread-and-butter-plates	1 butter dish
4 dessert plates	4 dessert bowls
4 water glasses	4 water glasses
4 cups	4 coffee mugs
4 saucers	——
4 knives	1 cutlery tray (holding 4 knives,
4 forks	4 forks, 4 spoons)
4 salad forks	1 scissor salad server
4 soupspoons	——
4 dessertspoons	——
4 butter spreaders	1 butter knife
4 teaspoons	——
1 meat platter	——
2 vegetable serving dishes	1 casserole
1 gravy boat	——
1 dessert serving bowl	1 dessert serving bowl
2-piece carving set	——
1 gravy ladle	——
3 serving spoons	3 serving pieces
1 salt	1 salt-and-pepper set
1 pepper	——
1 sugar bowl	1 sugar bowl
1 cream pitcher	1 cream pitcher
1 bread basket	1 bread basket
1 water pitcher	1 water pitcher
	1 coffee maker (and server)
Total: 82	**Total: 36**

The simplified menu, and also the use of stove-to-table and refrigerator-to-table utensils (so that food can be served in the same container in which it was prepared), results in additional laborsaving: you are spared the bother of handling and cleaning many pots, pans, and other kitchen utensils for the meal. Kitchen preparation of the conventional meal called for use of all of these: roaster, pan, rack, and cover; 2 saucepans and their covers; a soup pot with cover; 4 kitchen spoons; 3 mixing bowls; measuring cup; cake pan; colander; egg beater; kitchen knife; masher; and coffee-pot—23 additional pieces to be washed. The cafeteria meal called for only 2 kitchen spoons and a kitchen knife, making a total of

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105 items to be washed after the conventional meal, 39 after ours.

Since man has outgrown the cozy custom of dipping into the common bowl with his fingers, there is an irreducible hygienic minimum of tableware. But it is convention that piles on the extras. There is no good reason why salad can't be eaten with the dinner fork, and on the dinner plate. And why not put the bread and butter on the dinner plate too, and spread the butter on the bread with the dinner knife? Therefore we've made the following list:

Radical Time Savers

No cloth or mats (see Table-top Chart for stainproof types).

Paper plates and cups as well as napkins. Plastic-coated plates and cups (33) on which you can cut your roast beef and pour your gravy, and a paper cup that doesn't gratuitously flavor your coffee (33), have recently been developed.

Stainless steel flatware, smooth-handled for easier washing.

One fork, one knife, one spoon per diner.

No butter plates or butter knives; no salad plates or salad forks.

One-dish meals.

Stove-to-table cooking utensils and refrigerator-to-table ware: good-looking pots and dishes, to be used also for serving.

And let each member of the family set and clear his own place, with dishes in stacks, silver and napkins in holders, cafeteria-style.

You won't accept all these timesavers, nor will you use them for every meal. Until manufacturers perfect disposable plates and cups that have *all* the virtues of china and glass, you'll reserve many of these short cuts for the occasional picniclike cold supper when the menu is right for them and the mood is casual.

But perhaps you can use more short cuts than you think. See Chapter IX for table settings that involve the least equipment and fewest trips for fetching and carrying, as well as simplified menus.

Table linens are a convention, not a necessity, for either appearance or cleanliness, on a good table top. Stove-to-table and refrigerator-to-table ware is no wishful dream; a careful choice of inexpensive cooking pots and refrigerator dishes can look quite presentable on the table, and more expensive ones expressly designed for such use are as good-looking as many conventional serving dishes. Casserole dishes that come to the table are surely no novelty; or you can use large platters with gravy wells to serve an entire main course at one time. In any case, choosing dishes of simple shape and design, rather than ornate ones, will mean less time and work in dishwashing. Also avoid fragile, thin-walled ware.

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Because our first list is frankly too radical for daily use, here is a second one:

Conservative Time Savers

able covers or place mats that can be wiped off, such as printed or covered cork, pandanus leaf, Chinese matting, split bamboo, plastic, plastic film, or coated fabric.

able covers and napkins of material you wash but don't iron, such as seersucker, loosely woven or machine-knitted fabrics.

o saucers; mugs for coffee and tea.

cart, or large light trays, to cut down trips to and from the table. (You can buy carts with electrically heated tops to keep food warm.)

two-tier or three-tier serving table or a counter within reach, so you can clear between courses without getting up.

elamine plastic, or very durable heavyweight (vitrified) china of simple shape, which can be washed quickly and safely.

astic tumblers, for speedier dishwashing. Those of nylon or polyethlene are the best. Unbreakable glass is not yet on the market, but Libbey-Owens tumblers with beaded edges take a lot of rough wear. Any glass with a drinking edge that turns in slightly will stand more abuse than those with flaring edges. Smooth, simple-shaped tumblers of any kind take less care and time than stemware or footed goblets.

A Lazy Susan holding all serving dishes in middle of table within everyone's reach.

The Dining-Kitchen

6. A kitchen in which the family can eat its meals sweeps aside most of the work problems of the dining area. It may surprise you, if you have never seen it done, but you *can* eat pleasantly in the kitchen without the sight of kitchen clutter and the laboratory look of kitchen equipment. According to home economics testing, there are three efficient kitchen plans:

he U-shape, with sink in the center, range and refrigerator one on each side of the U.

The L-shape, with either range or refrigerator on the same wall as the sink, the other on the side wall; again the sink is between the other two.

The strip kitchen, with the equipment on two facing walls, sink on one, range and refrigerator on the other.

Depending on the shape of the room and the plan, your dining table may be placed: 1—at one side or corner of a wide kitchen; 2—at one end of a narrow kitchen; 3—in the center.

The first two are in effect dining alcoves and can be treated as separate from the kitchen. You can in fact separate them by an

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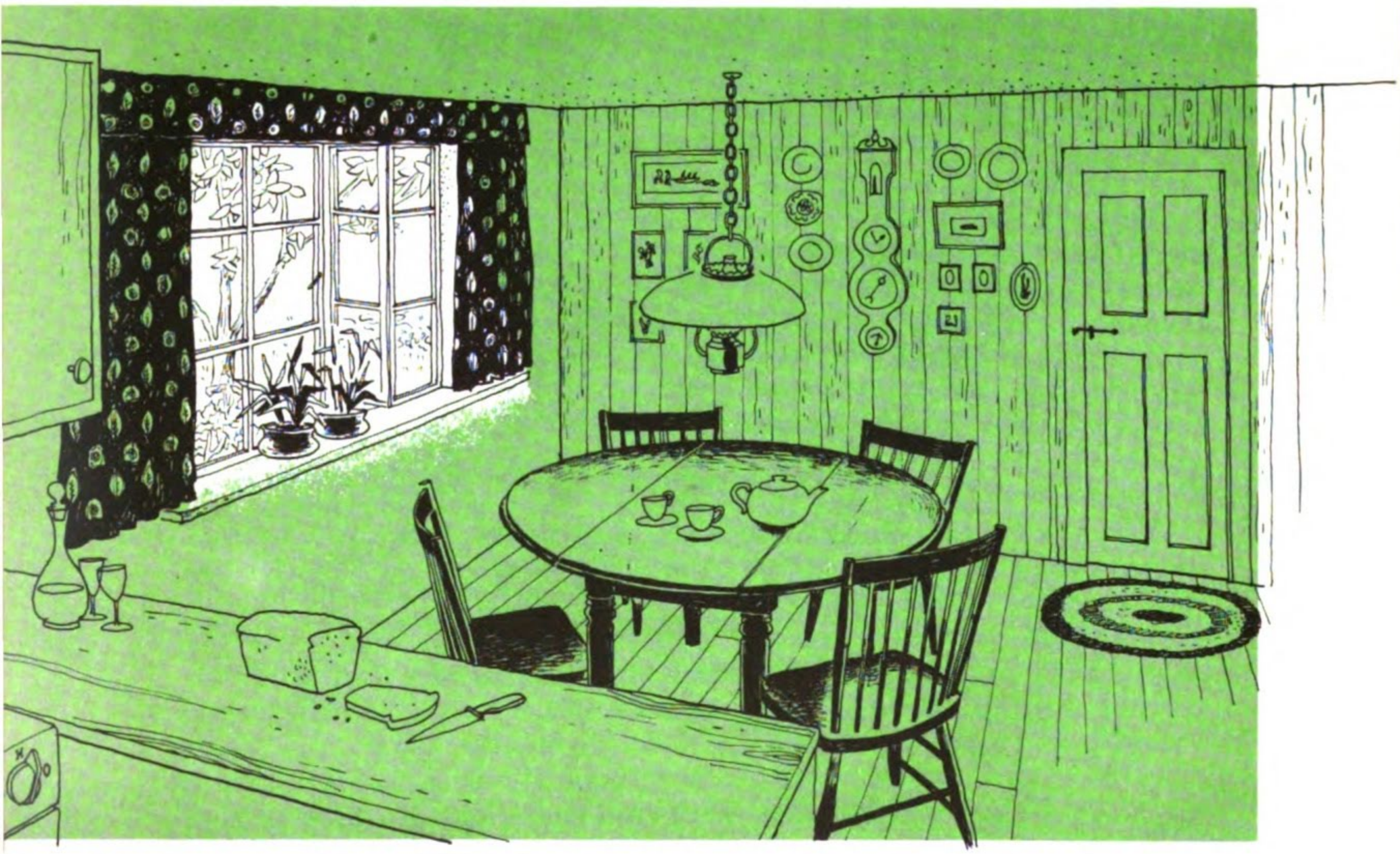
Kitchen cabinets with doors on front and back are available (133) and can be used as partition dividers; also, "room dividers" in wrought iron or wood can be found in furniture stores.

open, latticelike partition, by glass, a drape, or a bamboo or wood shade. Or use a partition about 36 inches high that contains storage for tableware.

The third plan, with the dining table set in the middle of the kitchen, is the most effective work-saver. It is also in line with our concept of the kitchen as a room for family living.

Into this kitchen bring pleasing colors such as would be considered for any other room, the grain of natural wood, patterned wallpapers, and the like. Fussy furnishings, such as frilly curtains, should be rejected, but in general the kitchen should be treated as a room, not as a laboratory.

Kitchen-dining with the table in a corner. The kitchen does not need to have a utilitarian look; it can, if you like, be cozy and early-American.



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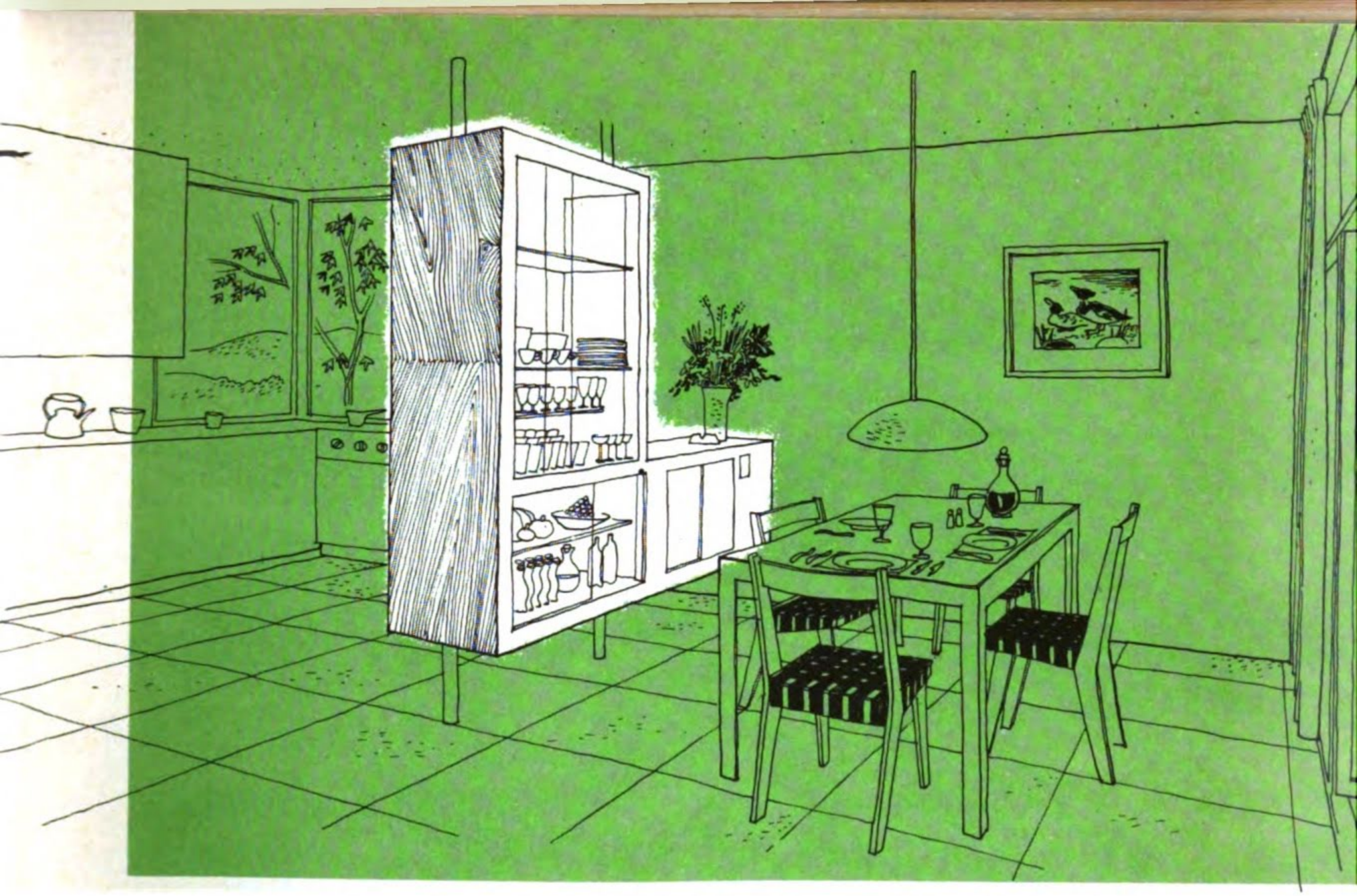

Kitchen-dining can be in the corner of a wide kitchen, given an alcove effect by a storage partition.

Dining-Kitchen Colors

Refrigerator (35) and gas range (36) can be ordered in various colors. Cabinets and shelves can also be had in color (37), or they can be painted.

The average refrigerator can be painted (but not the range, which has a porcelain finish). First wash the surface with soap and water, steel-wool it to give it a "tooth," wipe it down with cleaning fluid, then paint with alkyd enamel (26).

Do the whole kitchen in natural wood, plain or knotty pine, or natural chestnut. Build in your sink with the same wood, and paint refrigerator. The Wall Chart lists washable and stain-resistant finishes for wood.

For the walls, use wood paneling, or a bright-patterned wall-paper. For stain-resistant and thoroughly washable papers see the Wall Chart.

Wall spaces above work counters and range, trouble centers for stains, can be covered with wooden slabs with hooks to hang utensils used at that place. See the Table-top Chart for the hardest finishes.

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Kitchen-dining at one end of a long room; the antiseptic look is avoided here by natural wood walls and cabinets, and a fieldstone floor.

Dining-Kitchen Furniture

A sofa if you can possibly fit it in, roomy, sturdy, and covered with washable—i.e., plastic—fabric. Here the children can climb and bounce, Father stretches out with the evening paper before dinner, and Mother takes her ease during a free hour.

An easy chair instead of a sofa, or in addition, if your kitchen is that big. How about a rocking chair? Kitchen planners have come around to Grandmother's faith in it as the most relaxing chair to sit in.

A desk or its built-in equivalent, with telephone, writing materials, cookbooks. Kitchen planners prescribe this as a Planning Center; we would expand it to hold not only cookbooks but leisure reading, knitting bag, sewing basket; also household accounts, and engagement and address books.

A posture chair, or a posture stool (38).

A family bulletin board for messages, reminders.

A radio (but *not* television; that's too much distraction).

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One hurdle remains: What to do about kitchen clutter. The sight of bowls and utensils with which the dinner was prepared is not an attractive setting for eating. But it is not inevitable.

Avoid Kitchen Clutter

Clean up and put away as you go along.

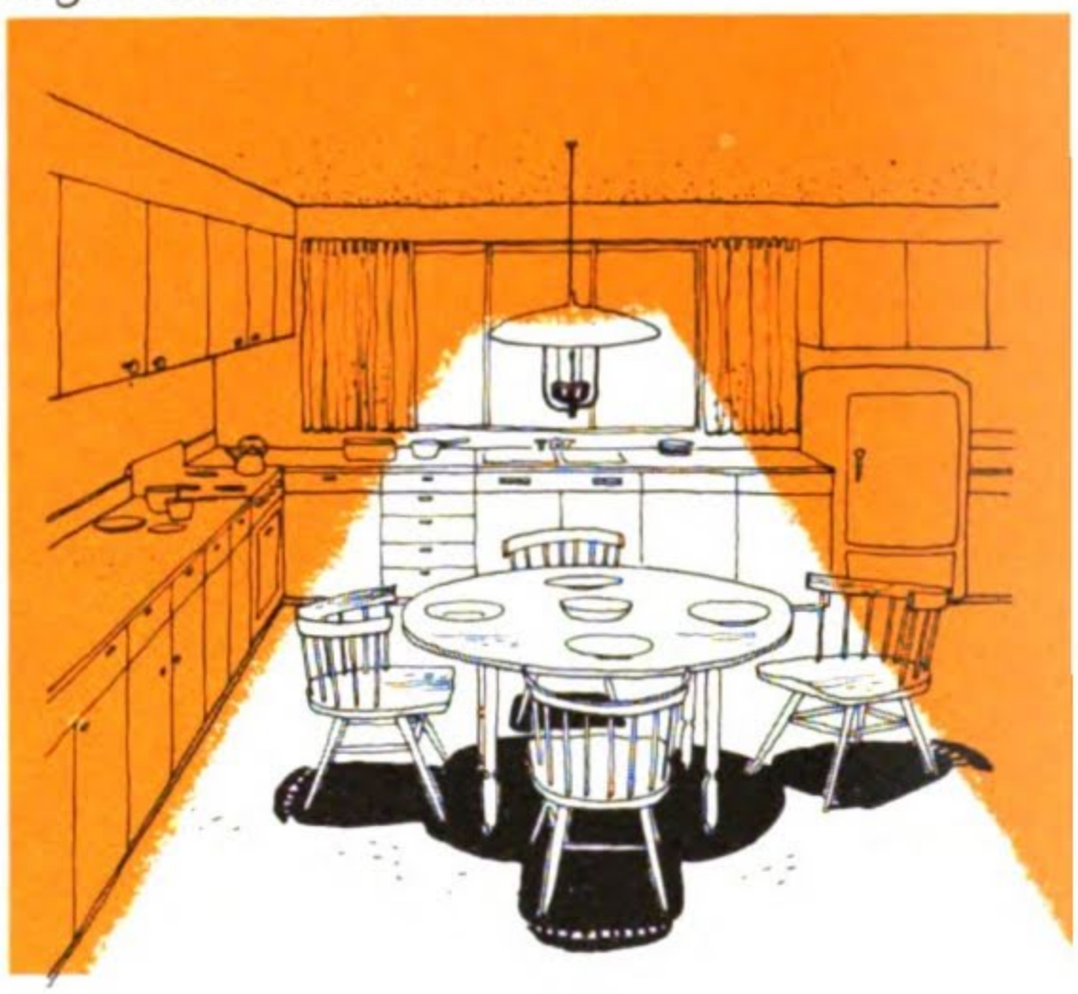
Use stove-to-table ware and refrigerator-to-table ware to cut down on the number of pots and dishes used.

Spotlight the table when dining at night, throwing the rest of the room into shadow.

Hang a roller shade or a wood-slat or bamboo blind, to pull down over the work counter—of fire-retarded material, or sprayed with fireproofing.

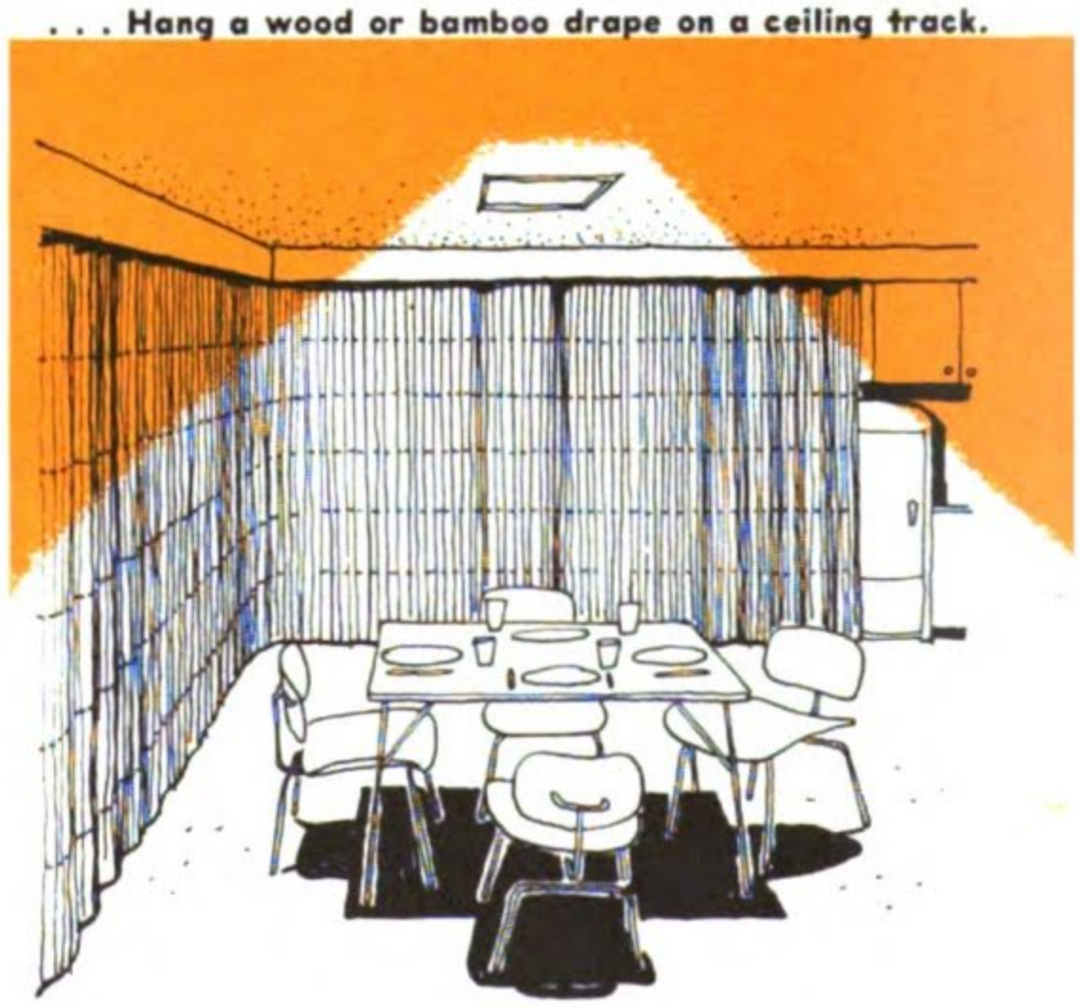
Hang a blind vertically and pull it across the part of the kitchen you want to hide. It runs on tracks screwed to the ceiling; to cover one wall, use a pull cord. If there are two walls, have two blinds, each running on a straight track, meeting at the refrigerator, so you can get at it during dinner without pulling the whole blind back. Fireproof these, too.

This last is borrowed from the theatre. You make the kitchen disappear, and provide a whole new setting for dinner, new color scheme, new textures, just by pulling a fire-retarded drape.



Two ways to conceal kitchen litter: spotlight the dining table . . .

. . . Hang a wood or bamboo drape on a ceiling track.



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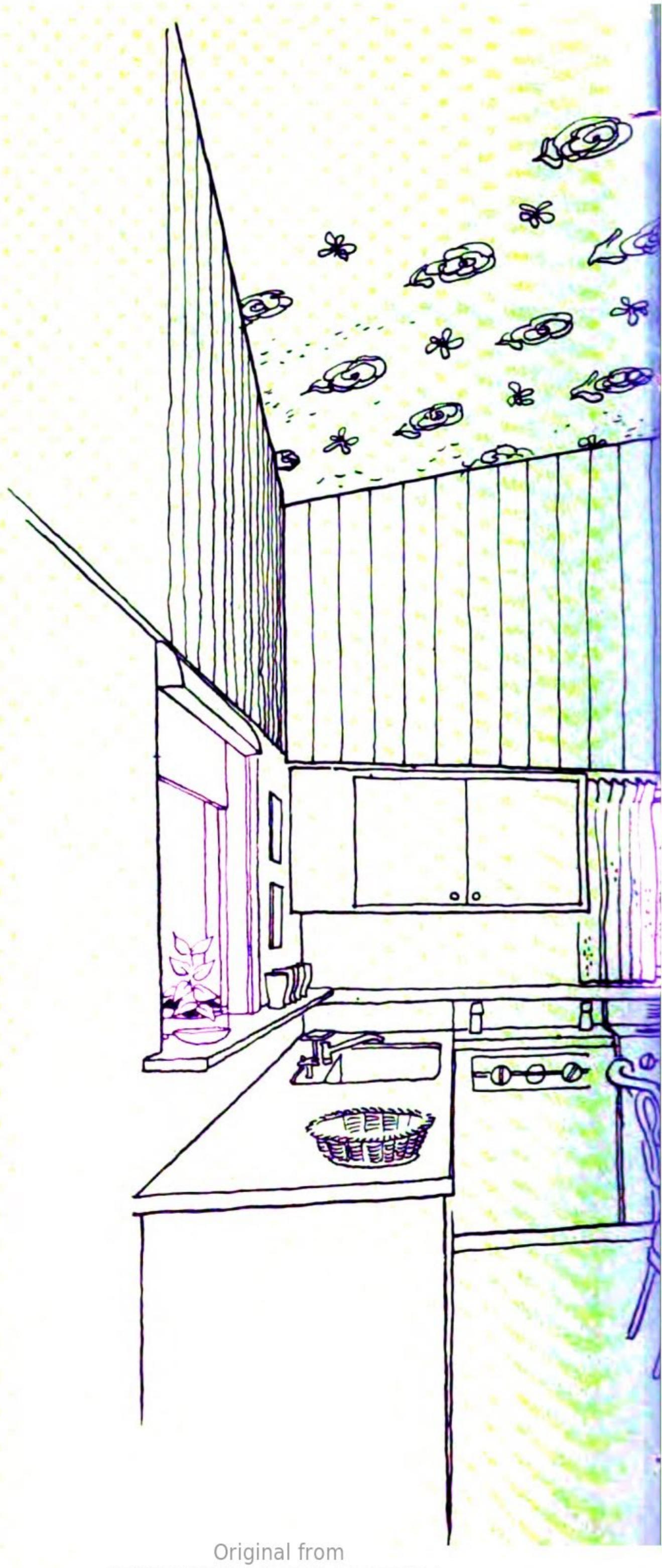

Here is a dining-kitchen where we have dined well, and enjoyed ourselves, too. With young children, and no help, this housewife made a virtue of necessity by transforming her large kitchen into a room for family living, dining, entertaining—with ideal working conditions for herself.

Her sink window has a view of Storm King Mountain and the Hudson River; a sliding window in the wall above her work counter (at left) looks into the nursery—which later can become an adult playroom, with counter and window for a refreshment bar. The sofa is plastic-covered. The colors are pink, green, and yellow; the ceiling is wallpapered with huge pink flowers, the refrigerator is green, and the sink is boxed in to match the cupboards.

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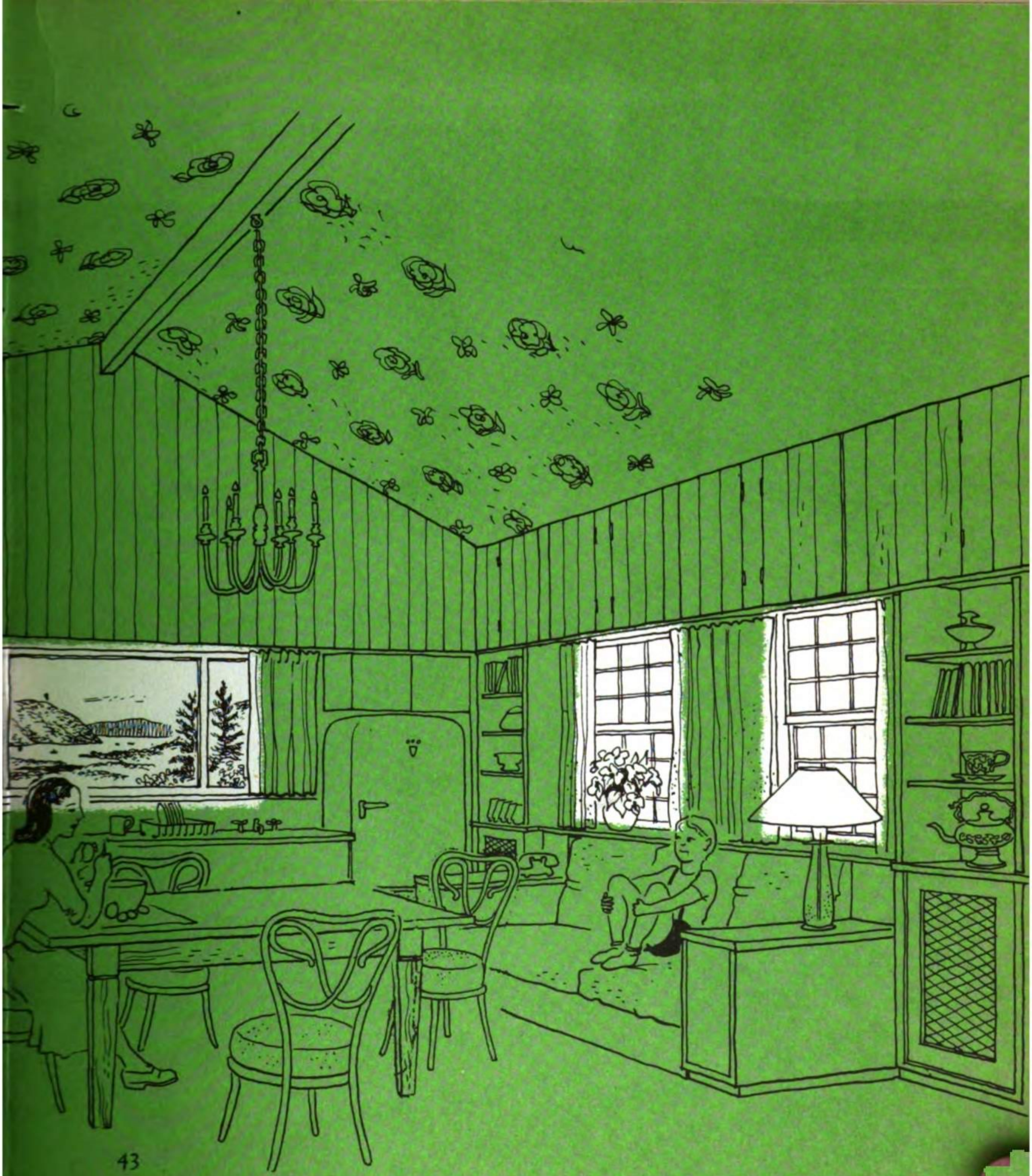

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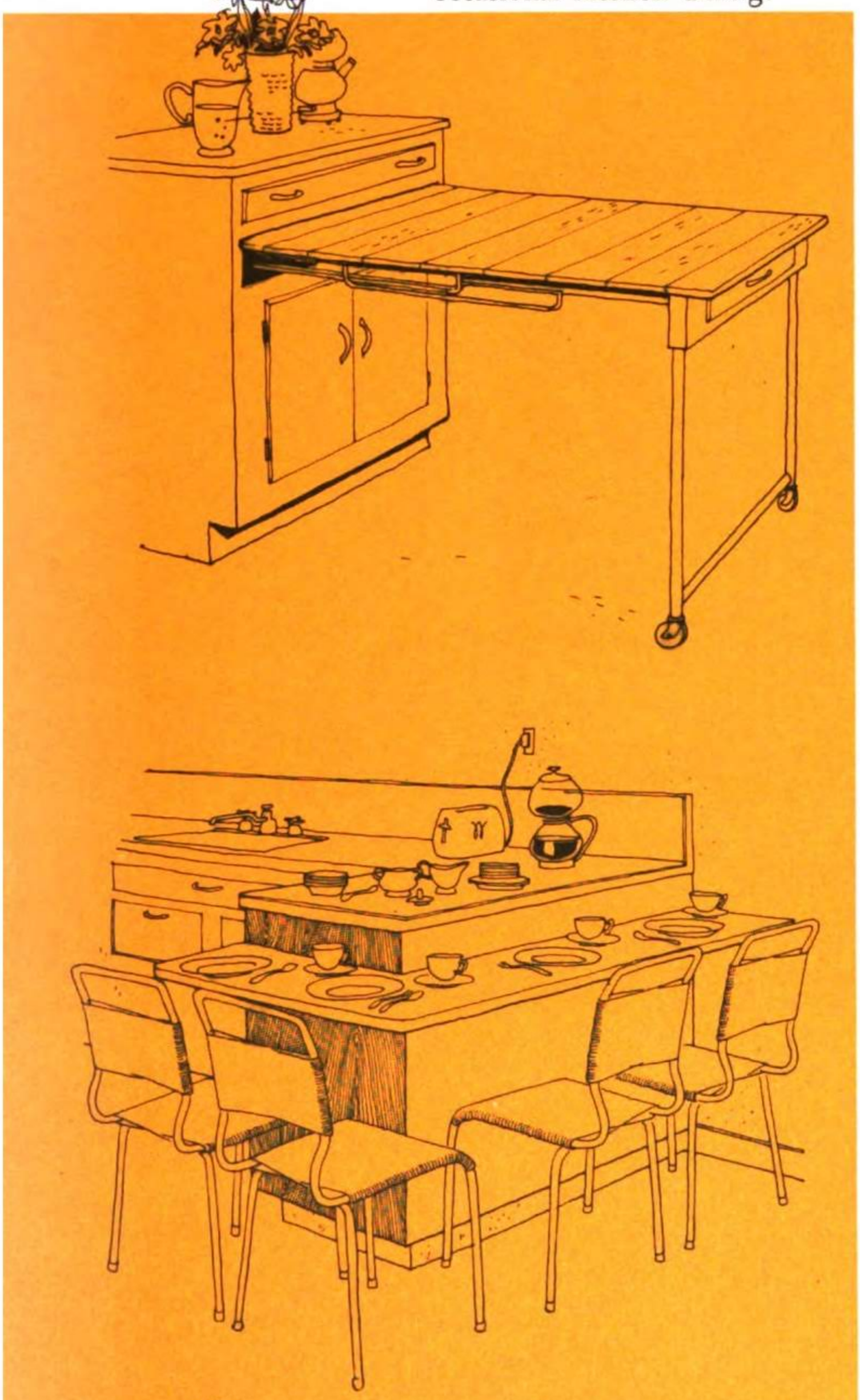
Even if you consider your kitchen too small to make use of the majority of our suggestions, here are some aids in making room for occasional kitchen dining:



Build a drop-leaf shelf that can be pulled up for occasional eating in the kitchen.

A kitchen cabinet is available that contains a pull-out table (39).

An 18-inch shelf built around a corner storage cabinet can seat four for a small kitchen meal.

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Breakfast in a Hurry

7. Even if lack of space, or deep-seated personal preference, keeps you from using the kitchen as your room for dinner, the weekday breakfast demands the speed and efficiency of kitchen-dining.

With the husband, and in many cases the working wife, rushing to the office, and the children usually on the verge of being late for school, co-operation (note the illustration) and preplanning are essential.

Set the table, or set out a buffet on the kitchen counter, with everything except perishables, the night before while cleaning up after dinner.

On the table or counter are: dishes, silver, napkins, glasses for juice, mugs for coffee; toaster, coffee-maker; jam pots, breakfast cereals in their original containers.

In the refrigerator (together at the front – not behind last night's roast) are: juice, in a tightly sealed container to preserve the vitamins; a dish with bread and butter already on it; cream, water, and milk in pitchers; eggs in a bowl, ready for cooking, etc.

Keep coffeepot, coffee, and measuring spoon together, near the range if you use a French drip pot (to be filled from the kettle), near the sink if you start with cold water.

The table can be arranged the night before for a hurry-up weekday breakfast for four: one prepares and serves the eggs; another takes care of the toast; a third does all the pouring—juice and coffee; the fourth is in charge of cereal, napkins, silverware.

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Now you see it, now you don't!

The dining room can be made hospitable and handsome without benefit of rugs, drapes, linens, upholstery, or Duncan Phyfe—by careful selection of colors, materials, and furnishings. This room has wood cabinets, chairs with plastic strap seats, a wood blind, a marble-top table, ceramic tile floor and painted wall, and a color scheme of brown, green, and wood-colors.

8. To a reader accustomed to a room devoted only to dining, with fixed and formal furniture, we may seem to have done frightening and unstabilizing things. The dining area we have described may be in the living room, in the kitchen, in an alcove—it may even turn up on your porch. It may have no permanent existence, disappearing from the living room after mealtime, or perhaps causing the kitchen to vanish and taking over its place temporarily.

If, in addition, the reader has been in the habit of setting the table according to immutable laws of etiquette, it may even seem not quite respectable to have a table without linens and bread-and-butter plates, with only three pieces of silver for each person, with serving dishes that come off the stove or out of the refrigerator.

We realize that all these short cuts may sound extreme—and we know that they can look slipshod and tawdry, too. But we also know that they can look and be charming, smart, and even beautiful. It's all in the way you do it. What is needed is planning and headwork at the start, to select and assemble everything with care. Find the proper color of paper napkin, the perfect wall color, truly good-looking cooking-and-serving dishes.

Our main thesis here is that formality is *not* necessary for beauty. It shows not less, but more, respect for the good things of life to plan an easier, smoother-running meal in a setting that suits its purpose—and to have more time in which to enjoy the meal and its setting.

We look forward to the day when living room, dining room, and kitchen will break through the walls that arbitrarily divide them, and become simply friendly areas of one large, gracious, and beautiful room. We think that day is not too far away.

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The all-in-one-room, permitting the easiest servantless living and the best kind of family life. The plan is adaptable to many types of houses, and to apartments as well. (This design was executed in a space 16 by 28 feet.)
Kitchen area (upper left): refrigerator, stove, sink and storage cabinets, can be bought in colors (35, 36, 37). Note the glass pass-through shelves to the right of the dishwasher, and the window in front of the sink—for serving to the outdoor table.

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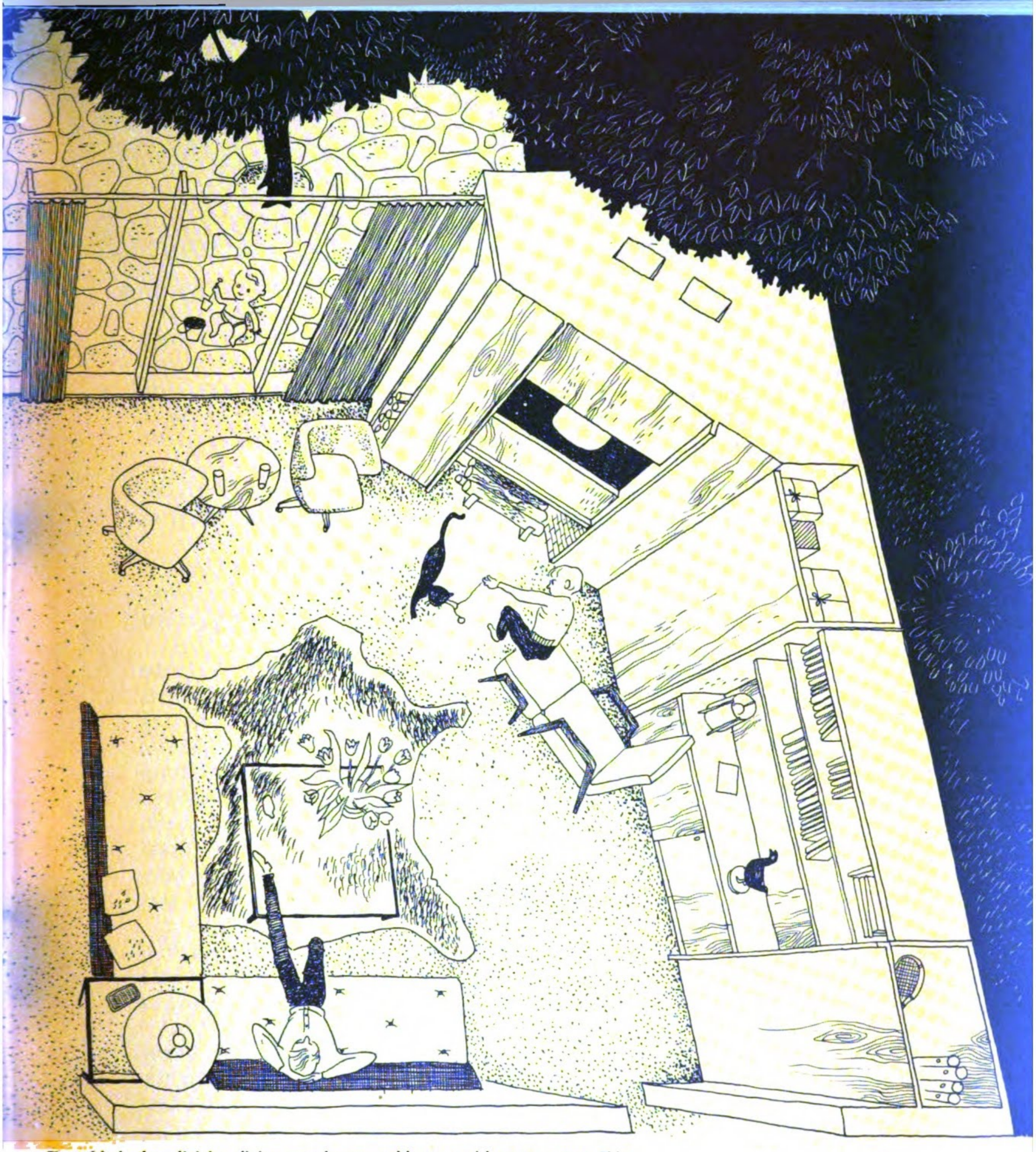

The table in the adjoining dining area has a marble top and legs on casters. This also serves as an "old-folks" corner, with sofa, desk, and bookshelves, and thus merges into the living area, where wall storage is behind sliding wood doors. A firewood closet (left of fireplace), can be filled from outdoors. Note small rotating chairs for television, sofa on rollers, marble-top coffee table. Curtains are of vinolyte and seersucker.

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CHAPTER IV

PRIVATE LIVES

THERE ARE three times as many bedrooms in America as there are kitchens. It is the room in which we spend a good third of our lives. Not only do we sleep there; we also dress and undress, read, sew, write letters, keep accounts, work at our hobbies, convalesce, and relax. Young children play in their bedrooms; older ones study and share confidences with best friends there. It is the most *personal* room in the house, the room in which we live our private lives.

Yet it is the room which we have taken the least trouble to fit even to its basic functions of sleeping, dressing, and storage of clothes.

To the housewife it is easily the biggest headache—more accurately, backache—of all. As she stops in the doorway each morning, toting her dustcloth, carpet sweeper, and mop, consider the scene that confronts her:

Gone is the sweet and charming picture of the night before: the draped and ruffled bed, the delicate night table, the sleek chests and bureaus, the skirted dressing table, all in the mellow glow of dainty, silk-shaded lamps. In the cold light of morning, where is the pretty illusion now? Bedcovers cascade to the floor, and lamp shades hang askew; the housewife must stumble over assorted shoes, slippers, and oddments of clothing that litter the carpet. Drawers and closets are open-mouthed, mute witness of the frantic hunt just made within their disordered depths. The elegant dressing table lewdly bares its skinny legs, and lint is a dingy film over everything.

From coast to coast, in rich homes and poor, the American bedroom at 8 A.M. looks the same . . . like an Okie camp. Think of the millions of hours it takes to put all these rooms in order again before each nightfall.

It is true that architects, designers, engineers, manufacturers, have given the bedroom a poor deal. If they spent a fraction of the energy, imagination, and science on it that they have lavished on

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the kitchen, or the bathroom, what a transformation we should see! But we needn't wait for them to discover the bedroom. There's plenty we can do by ourselves.

Planning the Bedroom

1. Unless we are building or remodeling, we must generally take the master bedroom where we find it, but in an apartment or a house where there are two or more additional rooms to assign, consider the needs of the occupant. An adult or an older child may like the privacy of a room apart from the others. An infant or a young child who requires attention at night should be near the mother's room, and also, if possible, away from the living room, to sleep undisturbed by evening entertaining.

A great work-saver would be a daytime sickroom adjoining the kitchen, especially for childhood illnesses, a continuous marathon for a mother while they last. The so-called maid's room, now rarely occupied by a maid, is usually well situated for this purpose. A sewing room, a playroom or a guest room while the family health is good, could be planned for easy conversion in time of illness.

Remember the steps in planning as we followed them in the living room: a. Decide the uses of the room. b. Divide the space according to these uses, keeping the different areas distinct by grouping the furniture.

Ideally, the bedroom for adults should be divided into three areas: sleeping, dressing and clothes storage, and leisure. Where space is limited, it is better to put a hobby elsewhere in the house than to cramp the dressing and storage space.

In the sleeping area, placing the bed with head only against the wall is most convenient for bedmaking. Provide enough space for a *large* bedside table, too. For the dressing and clothes-storage area you need a substantial unbroken space for the occupant—who literally needs elbowroom. Try to place this area near the bath. Best of all, of course, is a separate dressing room. You may find a way to approximate such a luxury:

- dressing space in the bedroom, away from the beds, across which a drape or screen can be drawn.
- corridor outside the bedroom, near the bathroom.
- closet built into the wall that separates bedroom and bath, opening into both rooms, so each can be used for dressing; with bathroom available for dressing, less bedroom space is needed. A solution for two people in a cramped room.

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The leisure area, designed to take some of the burden from an overworked living room, should be a clearly separated corner to take care of such activities as writing, keeping accounts, and doing night work from the office; for sewing, light hobbies like stamp collecting or drawing; or as a game area.

Floors, Walls, and Windows

2. If you will remember the daily labor of putting this intensively used room to rights, you will make housekeeping, not fussy decorating, your first consideration.

Under the bed, in the dressing area, and certainly in the leisure area, a smooth bare floor for easy cleaning is best, like linoleum or cork (40)—see the Floor Chart. For a warm, agreeable place to rest bare feet beside the bed and in the dressing area:

Scatter rugs that can be picked up for cleaning or laundering. There are standard devices to make them non-skid (5).

A cotton rug, or a runner of carpeting to the bathroom.

Radiant heating in the floor, which can then be of linoleum, asphalt tile, or rubber tile, without any rug or strip. This, of course, is an expensive project.

Walls—especially behind the head of the bed if there is no headboard—should be thoroughly washable and dark, or covered in a washable material, to avoid head marks. Look at the Wall Chart.

Windows in the bedroom demand covering for privacy and light control, but of a kind that won't rattle in the breeze from the open window, and easy to clean. Suggestions:

Plasticized roller blinds, installed at the sill and drawn upward, or double-hung. See Chapter V, page 99.

Draw curtains of washable material that doesn't need ironing, in a dark color. A separate plastic lining gives some protection against rain and soil from the window.

All-plastic curtains, for the same reasons.

Lighting

3. General illumination is necessary, and a flush ceiling fixture will give it. One light should be turned on by a wall switch at the door so that you won't stumble through the dark to the bed light. Floor and table lamps anywhere in the bedroom are worse than a housekeeping problem; near the bed, which is constantly shifted about in housecleaning, they may be an actual hazard. For intensive lighting where it is needed, there are many safe built-in devices.

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The Bedside Light should be simple, adjustable, and securely anchored.

You can fasten it directly to the bed, or to the wall at the back or side of the bed, preferably *not* on the bedside table itself. But if it must be on the table, be sure it is secure, and not in a position where a careless motion of your arm, or shifting of the table, would easily topple it.

Another suggestion is to put pinhole spotlights (15) in the ceiling, a construction job and therefore more expensive, but good when two occupy the room and like to read at night—possibly at different times. Or put a light along the full width of the headboard, on the wall behind it.

Light in the Dressing Area should be placed so as to illuminate the entire area, since dressing involves moving about. Most practical is light from the ceiling, or from high on the wall. Or you may want a light fastened to the sides of a mirror. Good lighting inside a closet, or directly outside, is helpful; also paint the closet a bright white for improved visibility.

Light in the Leisure Area: General illumination can come from overhead, but for close work it is better to have it either built into the desk; fastened to the bookshelves or to a wall cupboard above a pull-out work table; or as a pinhole spot (15) above the work or game table.

Furnishing the Master Bedroom

4. Our idea of the best, and most easily cared-for bed, using present-day equipment, would include these factors:

It would be *hand-high*, a real laborsaver to the person who must make it and clean under it. There is no sensible reason for the way beds have been settling closer and closer to the floor, but if you insist on a low bed, why not extend the frame all the way down to floor level, so that neither dust nor lost small objects can collect under it?

Casters or rollers—with caster brakes if required—are probably the greatest energy-saving addition to your bed (see Caster Chart).

A padded headboard, attached to bed or wall, pitched at an angle for sitting up or adjustable, means more comfort and eliminates extra pillows. It should be of scrubbable material, or have a washable slip cover.

A foam-rubber mattress (41), which does not need turning; or an older-style mattress, on which straps are a help in turning—

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but actually any good-quality mattress should not require to be turned more often than four times a year. Weekly mattress-turning is merely a myth left over from the days of the straw mattress.

Bedding can be cut to a minimum by using new products—and by eliminating the useless, showy items. Our mothers used to make up a bed with some thirteen pieces; these included such items as mattress cover, bed pad, comforter, and bedspread, pillows with an overticking removable for washing, and a bolster. Much of this has gone and more is going.

Modern Bedding

The mattress cover, for keeping dust out of the mattress, has become superfluous with the vacuum cleaner.

The pad is dispensable on a foam-rubber mattress (which is minus buttons).

Blankets and comforters are being replaced by the single electric cover (42).

An attractive quilt, electric or not, large enough to cover bed and pillows, can also do double duty as a bedspread.

Button the top sheet to the quilt and you have only one piece to pull up in the daily bed-straightening.

Sheets with ready-made mitered corners (43) are available, to cut down the smoothing and tucking of the undersheet.

Nylon contour sheets reduce bedmaking time, laundry, and storage space.

For the weekly stripping and changing of bed linens, you may want some device for hanging the bedclothes out of the way:

Towel bars on the wall or the inside of the closet door, which can also hold clothes when undressing at night. (Leaving the closet door open when bedmaking enables you to air closet and bedclothes at the same time.)

clothesline stretched across the window that can drop to one side under the window curtain or blind when not in use.

Bedside Tables

The standard 18-inch bedside table-top is never large enough to hold the inevitable clock, books, magazines, telephone, radio, writing materials, tissues, and so on. An adequate table should be at least 24 by 24 inches square, 12 inches higher than the top of the mattress, and with two or three shelves or drawers. Suggested:

carpenter-made job, with the above specifications plus built-in radio and pull-out tray for eating, reading, writing, make-up.

No bedside table at all, but instead a carpenter-made headboard with everything in it: light, recessed shelves, telephone, and pull-out tray.

Less expensive—a practical bedside table made of two coffee tables fastened one on top of the other, or any two small tables with the right-sized tops, their legs cut down to bring the double-decker down to the right height.

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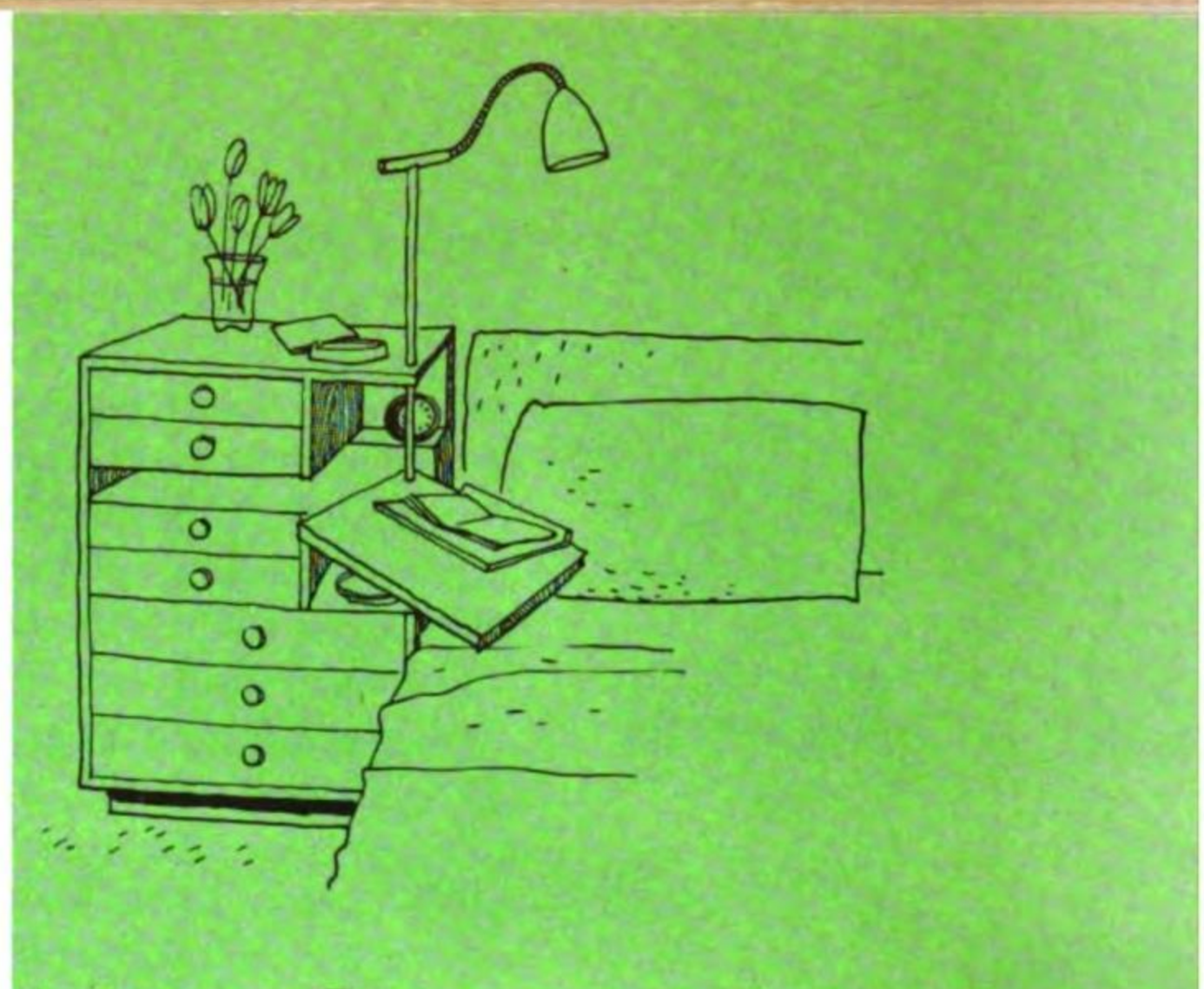
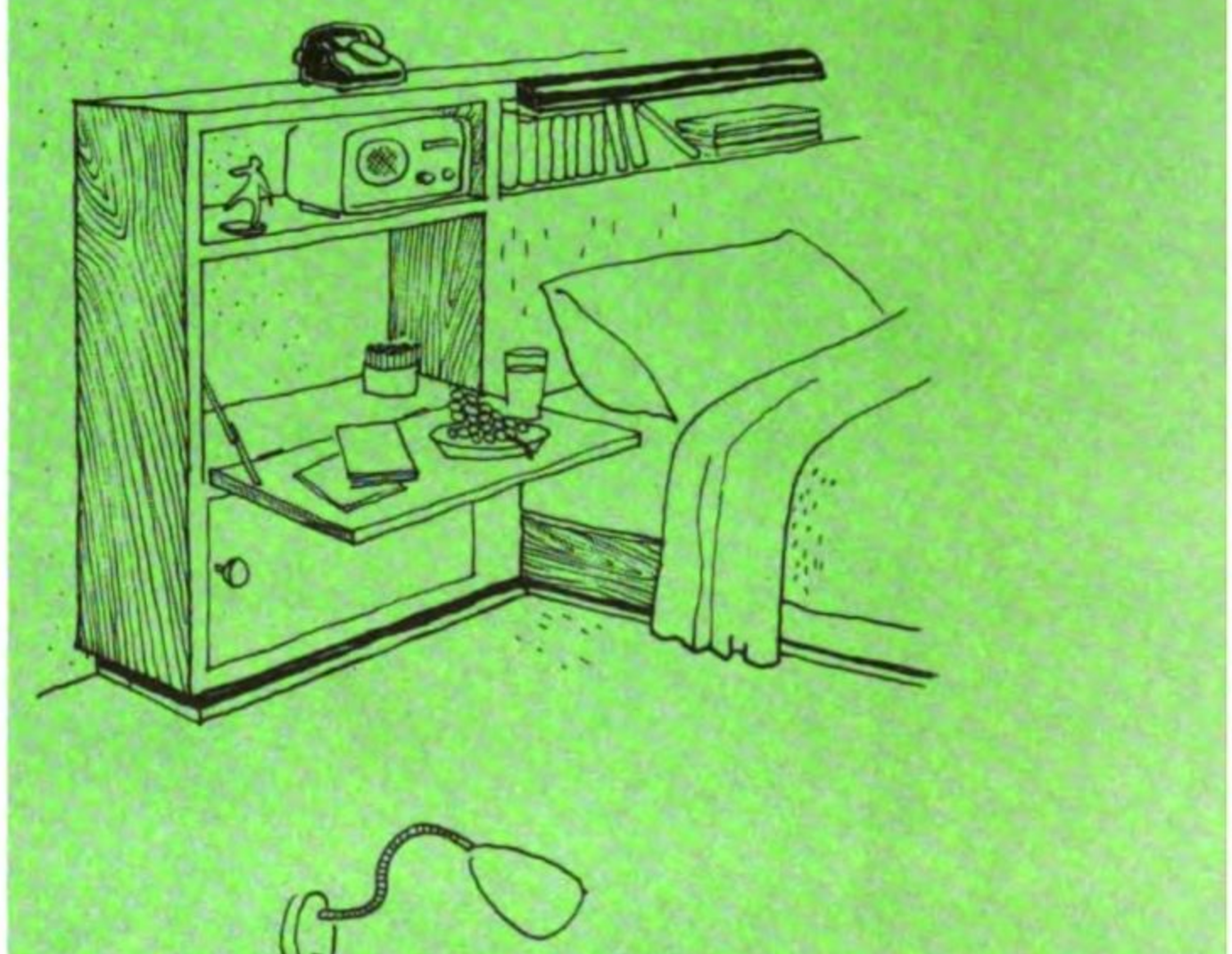
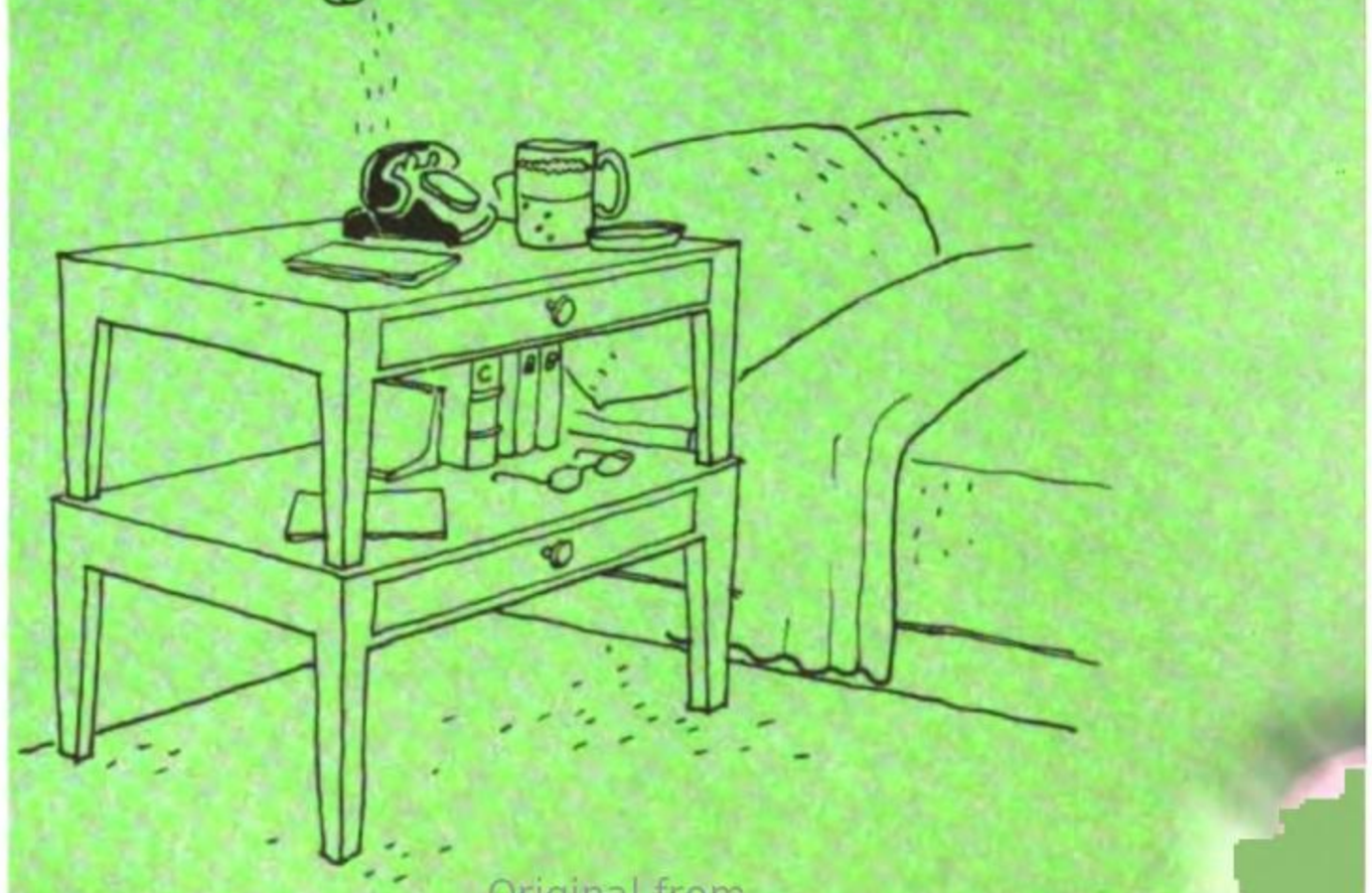
Custom-made bedside chest, with many drawers, a pull-out pivoting shelf (for working or eating in bed), and built-in adjustable lamp.



Headboard case. Provides shelves, drop-leaf bedside surface with a cupboard below, and a tubular light over the bed. Carpenter-built; check "Do-It-Yourself" shops and furniture stores for similar ready-made headboards.



Home-made bedside table of generous size. Built by cutting down the legs of two lamp tables and stacking them. Has two large shelves and two drawers.



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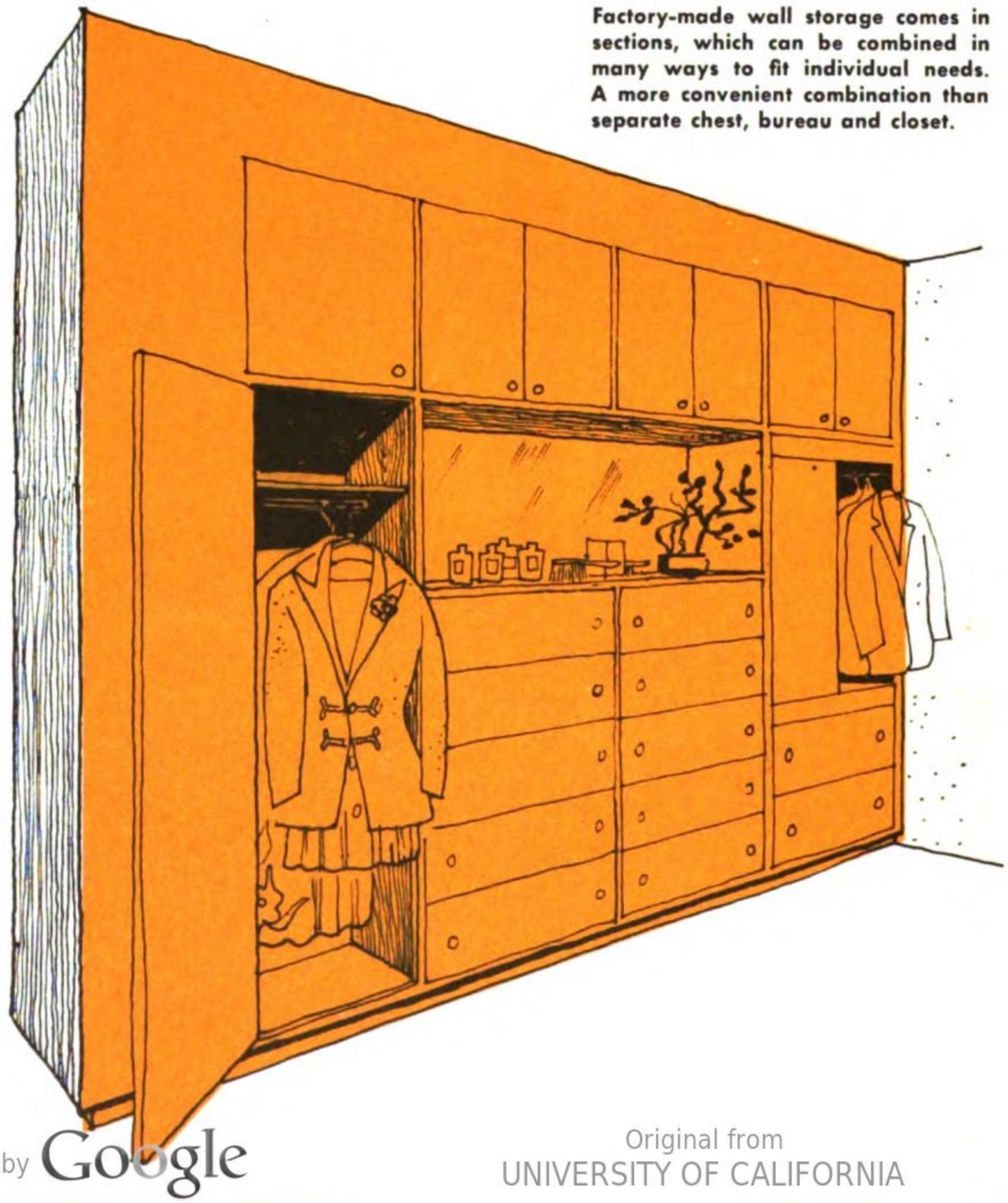
Storage Pieces—bureaus, highboys, and so on—have undergone little change since the days of the bustle, and are hopelessly unsuited to hold a modern wardrobe in any sort of order. The nuisance of periodically reorganizing their contents, plus the labor of cleaning on top of and around them, indicates the need for built-in-wall storage.

Storage has nothing to do with decoration. It is purely an engineering job, and the best storage engineering is wall storage.

Wall Storage

Carpenter-built wall storage is recommended for homeowners; even if you should sell your house someday, you have added an appreciable value to it. But since this is an engineering job, your first step is measurement—to see what clothes you have to provide for. There can be no set rules or average specifications given for a wardrobe closet—your income, your personal tastes, and a variety of other fairly intangible factors must be considered. But at least



Factory-made wall storage comes in sections, which can be combined in many ways to fit individual needs. A more convenient combination than separate chest, bureau and closet.

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you can break your clothing list into groups, according to how each item is stored:

Hanging: coats, suits, dresses, skirts, blouses, trousers, slacks.
Drawers: underwear, shirts, scarves, gloves, handkerchiefs.
Shelves: hats, luggage.
Racks: shoes, ties, hats if you have more vertical space than shelf space.

When you have made such a list, you are ready to make your own storage specifications. On the following pages are some sample wall-storage plans.

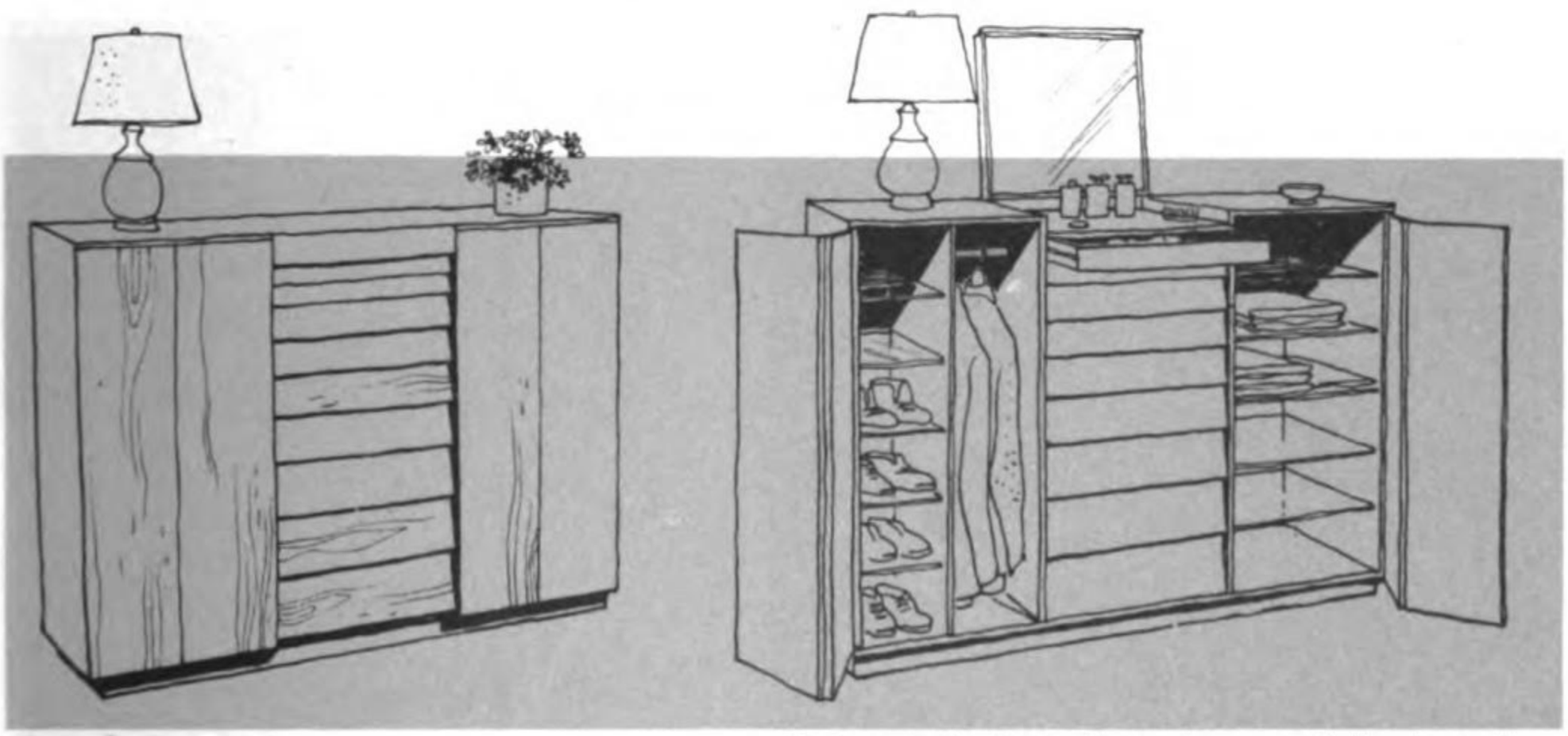
As an alternative to carpenter-built wall storage, there are factory-made wall units (2). These are recommended for the apartment dweller, since they can be moved.

Chests

Custom-built chests are a second choice to wall storage, and are not much more expensive than high-quality ready-made chests and dressers. You can have the cabinetmaker put in whatever drawer details fit your needs, and also add: legs, of a height to let broom or vacuum cleaner go under, and to give the bottom drawer more usefulness; stainproof, waterproof tops; and such over-all design that they can stand banked together in the room, saving space.

Ready-made chests, including some of the same sort of features as these custom-built jobs, have recently begun to become available, but as yet they are comparatively expensive.

If wall storage or custom-made chests are not for you, improve your present chests with partitions and trays, and improve your existing closet to yield more and better organized space:



Factory-made chests. A new type, carefully planned for *today's* wardrobe (14). Designed by Edward Wormley.

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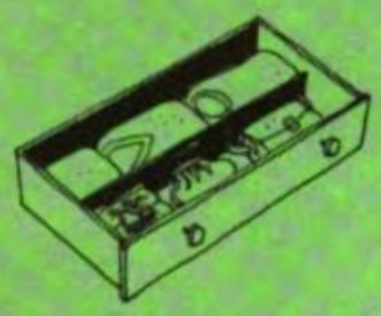
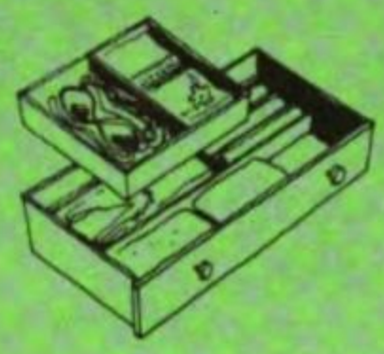
Old-fashioned bureau drawers can be kept more orderly by partitioning. Have plywood cut to size; hold in place with glued strips of square molding.

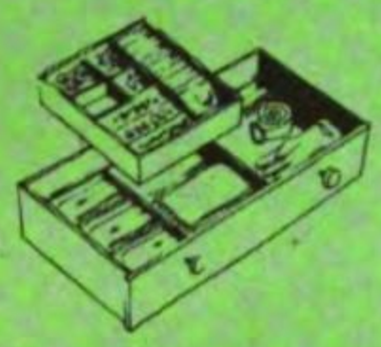
Sweaters, Handbags



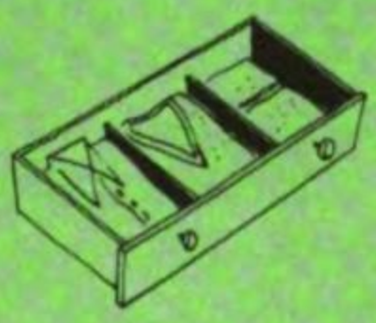
Nightgowns, Slips, Girdles (rolled), Brassieres, Pants



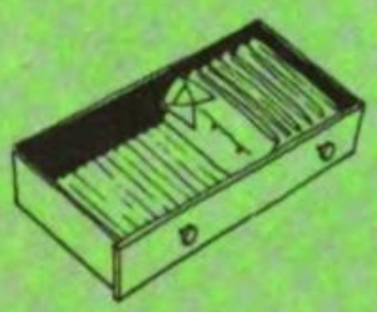
Stockings, Scarves, Gloves, Belts, Ribbons, Bows, Jewelry, Handkerchiefs



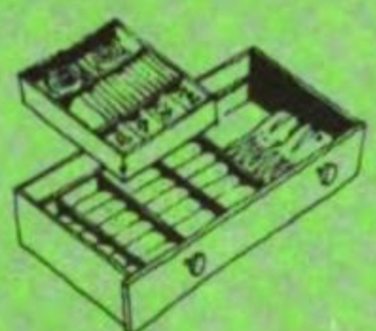
Shirts, Sweaters, Scarves



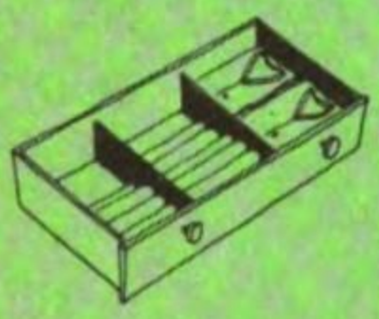
Shirts (filed on layer of corrugated cardboard)



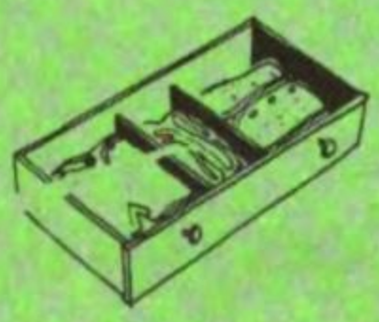
Socks, Gloves, Belts, Suspenders, Handkerchiefs, Jewelry

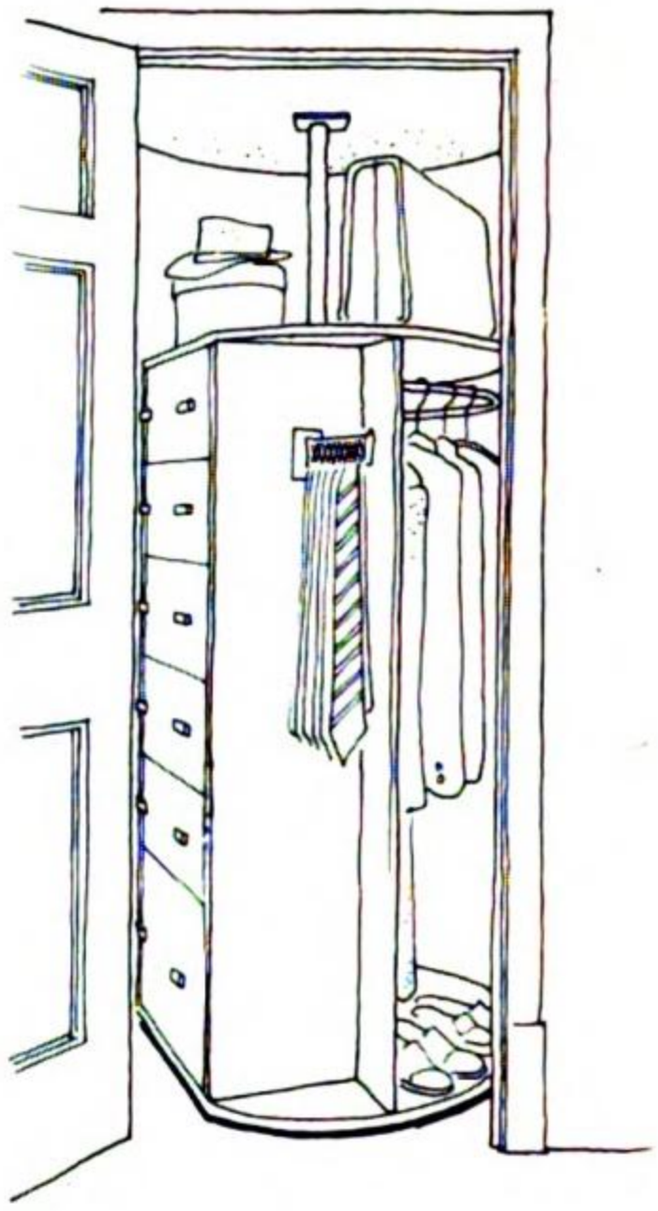


Underwear (rolled), Pajamas

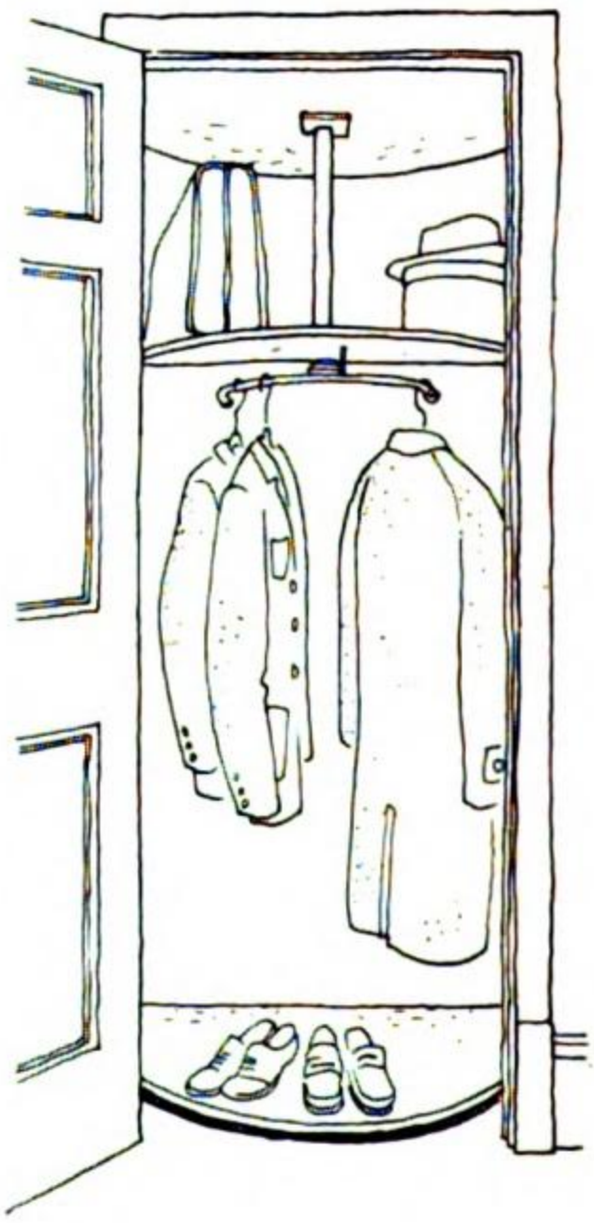


Summer: Shorts, Swimming Trunks





For maximum clothes-storage space in a small closet: The two views indicate how this circular device, known as a "Roto-Closet," rotates on a pipe stem, with access at the closet door, so that almost all the area is utilized. Must be installed by a carpenter.



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Reversible blouse and skirt hanger (47)

Skirt hanger (46)

Children's closet rod doubles closet hanging space (47)

Coat hanger—for high-up hanging (51)

Pull-out rod for narrow space (7)

59

Closet Aids

Instead of the customary single bar, 5 feet 6 inches high, subdivide your closet. Use the usual bar only part way across —for overcoats, evening dresses, and other long articles of clothing. For blouses, jackets, suits, use bars at two levels, the upper bar still within reach at 80 inches, the lower above dragging level at 40 inches.

If your closet has enough height, 9 feet or more, hangers are available mounted on 3-foot poles. With these, you can attach hangers to hooks on the closet ceiling, or to a bar or a rod near the ceiling, lowering them off easily when needed.

Use the back of the door and the inside of the closet for additional space—as shown in the illustrations on these pages.

Wire hangers are inexpensive and in common use—but remember that while they may easily hold a woman's blouse, they are likely to lose shape, or even collapse completely, under a man's heavier coat.

Many space-saving devices are available in department and hardware stores; this seems to be a fertile field for mechanical ingenuity.

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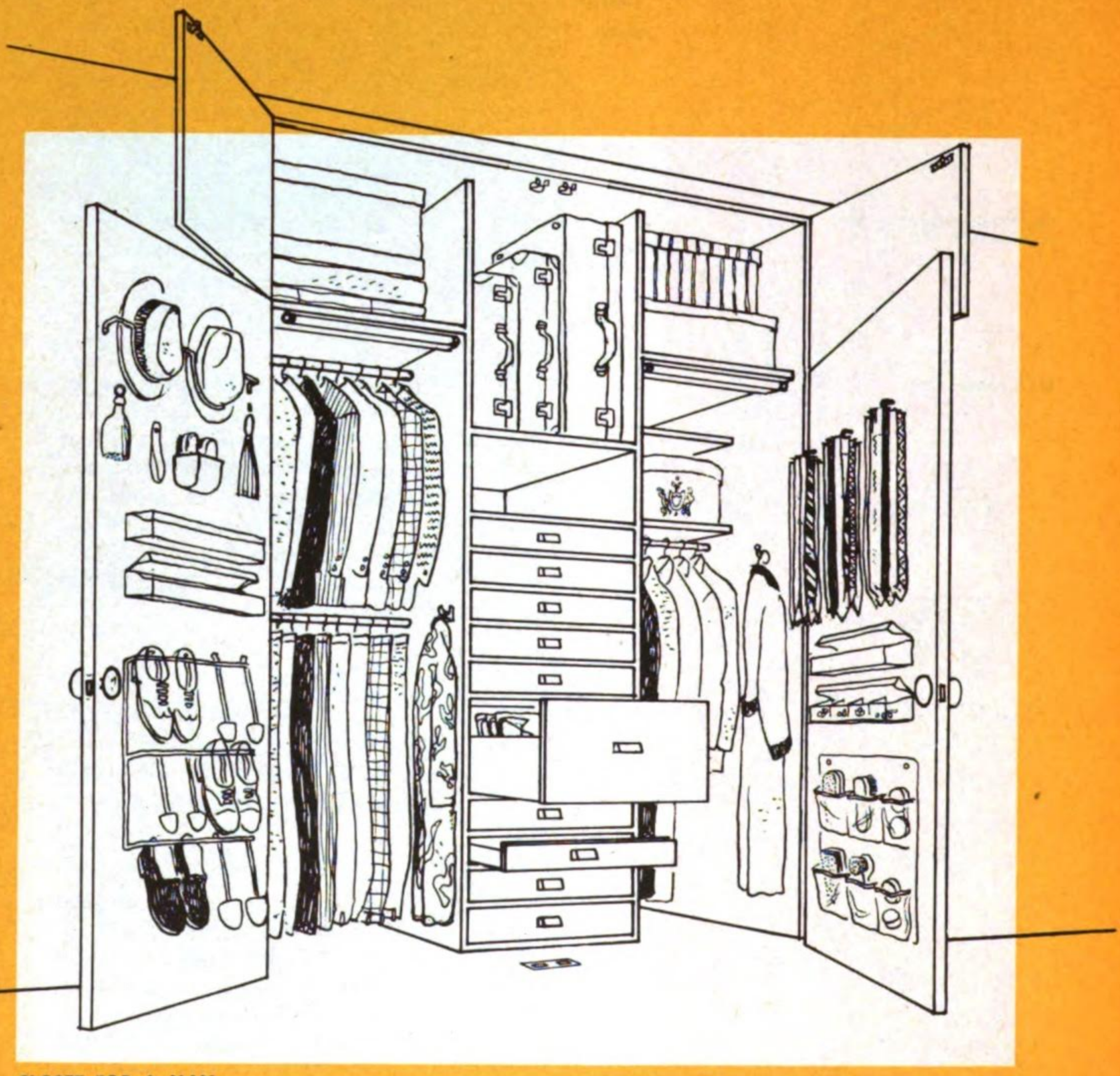

CLOSET FOR A MAN

Good, spacious closets can save much housework. Confining all that pertains to dress in a single well-organized area minimizes litter, and saves daily dusting and arranging of chests and bureaus. Note the lighting, the drawer knobs (143) (that can be marked for identification of their contents), two-tier hanging, transparent bags and boxes, the slanted rack for handbags, hook for hanging current night clothes.

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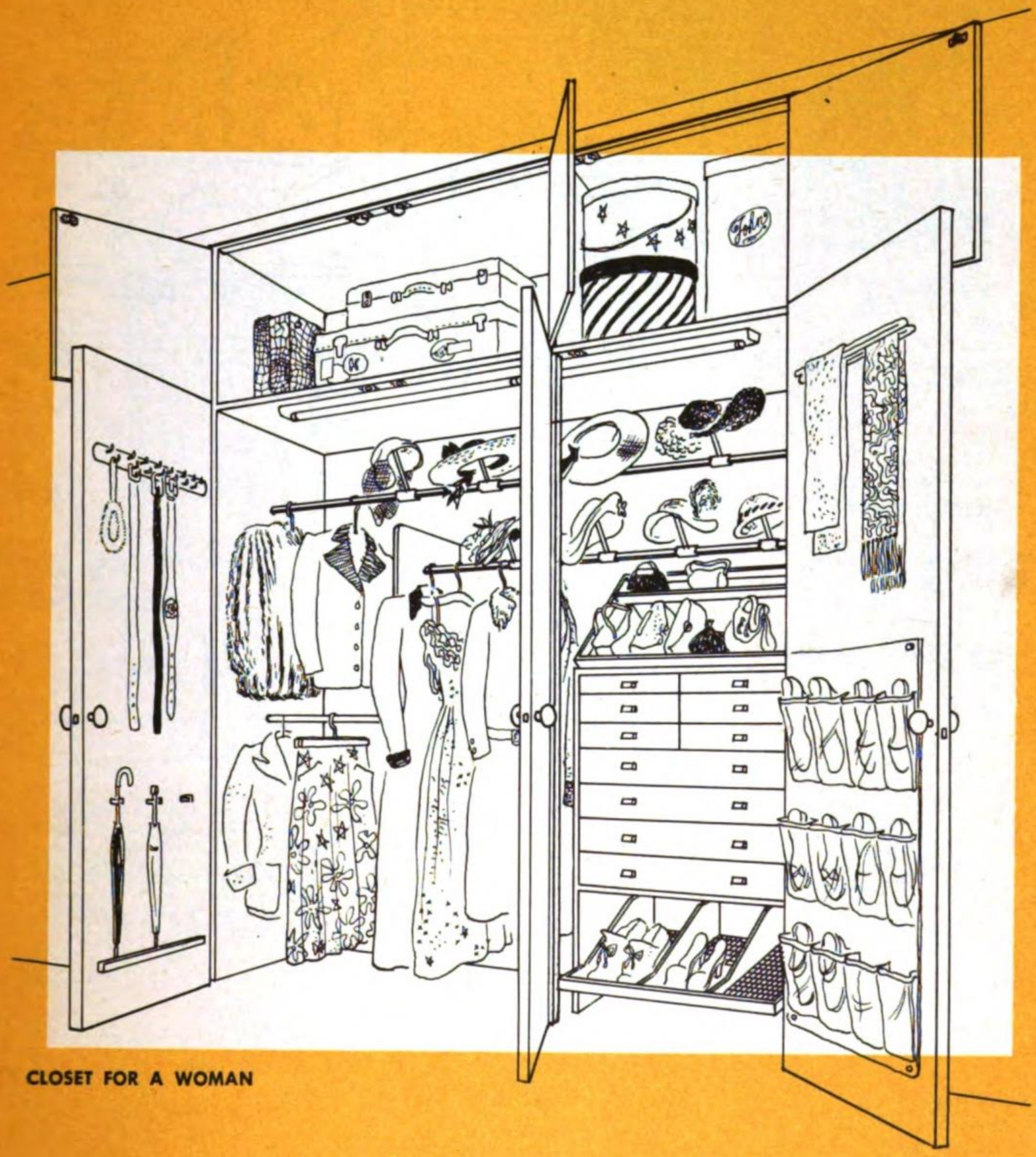

CLOSET FOR A WOMAN

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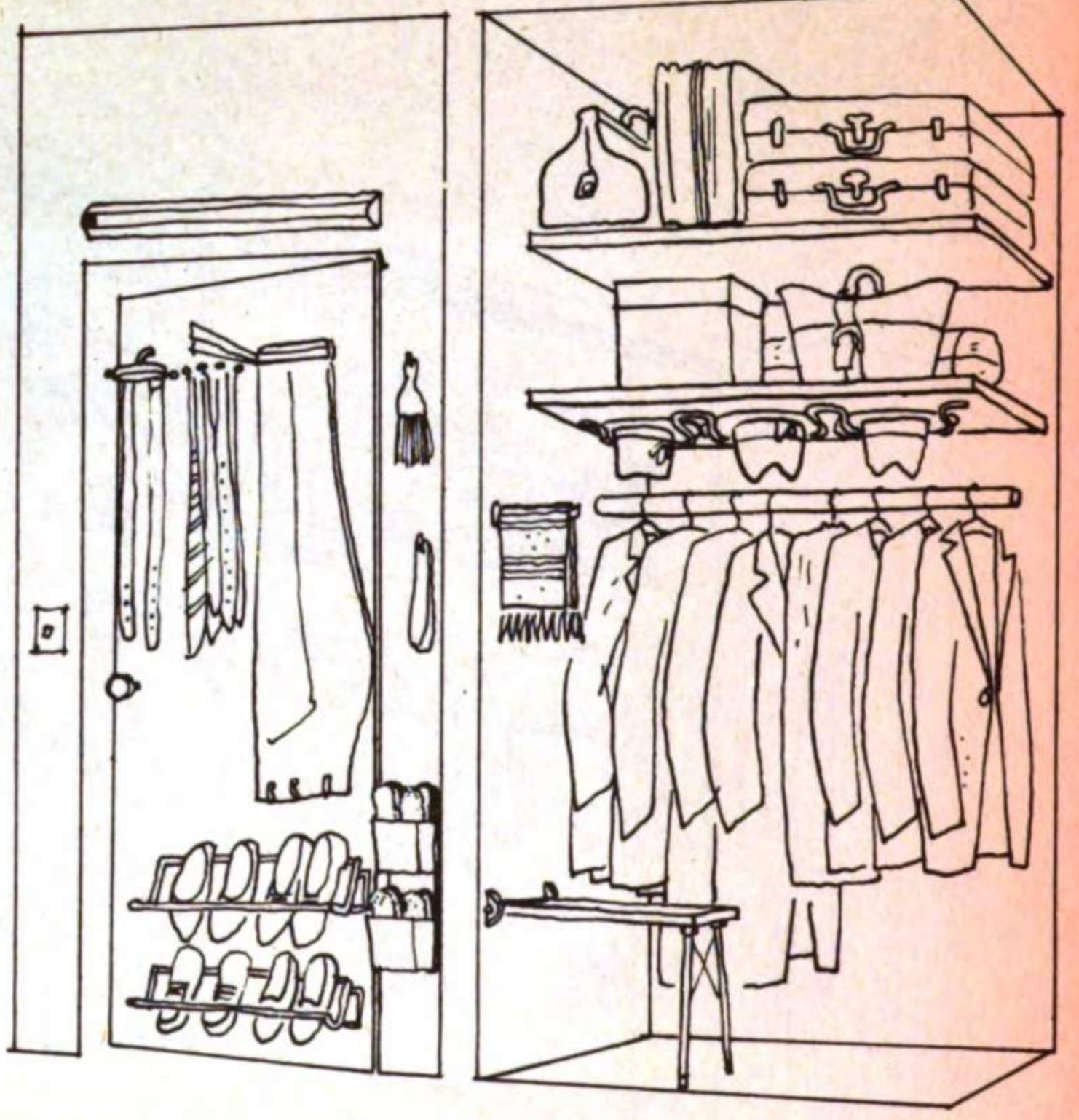
Shoe rack combined with shoe trees (45)

Rack-type shelf for closet door (49)

Hatrack plus rod (7)

Folding tie rack (7)



Ordinary 3-foot closet fitted for a man. Note fluorescent light above the inside of door, drop-leaf bench for shoeshining and for reaching luggage, use of the underside of the shelf for hats. (Use of back of door shown on "torn-away" wall at left.)

Cabinet attached to back of door (44)

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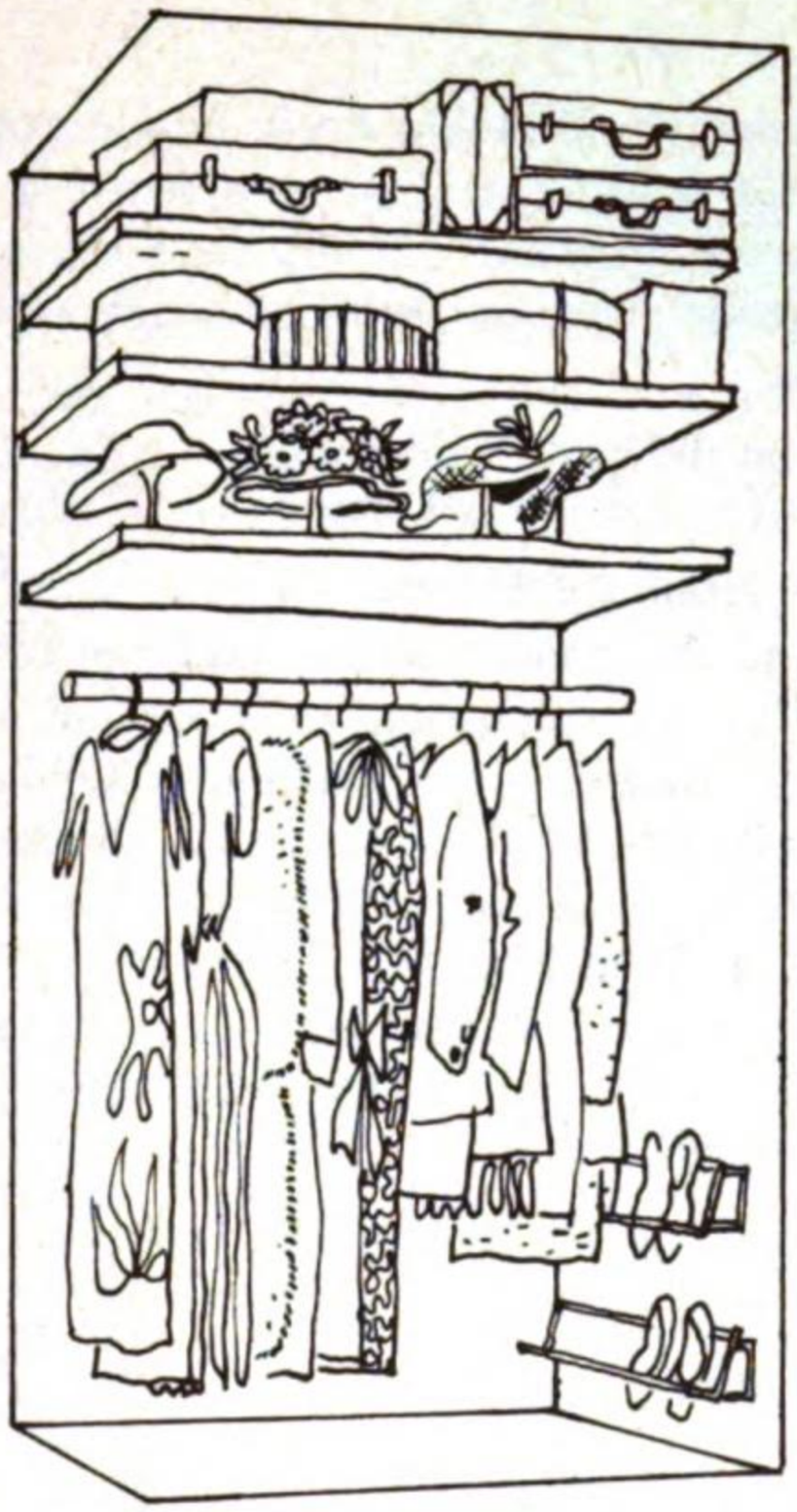
For storage under beds: cedar or aluminum boxes (50)

Umbrella holder (7)

At night, hang clothes on valet stand (51)

Use vinolyte shoe bag for many things (48)



The usual 3-foot-wide closet with a small door can be made more useful by installing some of the excellent hardware now on the market. (Shown with wall torn away at right to indicate fittings on door and surrounding area.)

Keep shoes on rack that rolls out of closet (47)

Transparent vinolyte storage bag (48)

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Furnishing the Dressing Area: Beside storage facilities, you need these for dressing: a chair or a bench; a full-length mirror or a smaller one, high enough up; a shelf or a drawer for a man's combs and brushes; and provision for hanging clothes as they are shed, such as:

Rungs on the back of the chair;
Bars on the wall or closet door;
A silent valet (51), or an old-fashioned costumer.

The dressing table may be eliminated entirely to save space and housework; many women prefer to comb their hair and make up before the well-lighted bathroom mirror. For this, provide an extra medicine chest deep enough to hold cosmetic jars, or shelves of glass or laminated plastic, or a small chest of drawers.

A woman who uses a dressing table should realize that it is really a workbench, and keep it functional, with no ruffled skirts to gather powder and dust and get caught in the drawers. Here are some desirable features, though no ready-made piece we have seen combines all of them:

Functional Dressing-Tables

Stainproof top: glass; or see the Table-top Chart for other materials and finishes.
A light fixed to the mirror, or a light on each side.
Easily washed interiors of cosmetic drawers; some come with enameled metal lining. You can line yours with plastic cloth or the aluminum foil you use in the kitchen.
A hinged door with shelves attached, which can hold cosmetic bottles—in effect a tray.
Storage space for your accessories: such as a shallow tray-type drawer for jewelry; shallow drawers for gloves, scarves, belts, handkerchiefs; a sectional drawer for stockings; a deep file-cabinet type of drawer for handbags.

Furnishing the Leisure Area: Each leisure-hour activity calls for its own furniture. Save both space and housekeeping with built-in arrangements:

Counters or pull-out slabs for work or writing surfaces.
Wall cupboards for storing tools and materials.
A bench or stool to slide under counter or into wall cupboard.

To avoid putting away work in progress, hide the whole work area with a screen, or a roller blind, or a draw curtain of fabric, wood, or bamboo.

Whatever seating you have in this area should have simple, lightweight frames, rollers or domes, and tight-seat upholstery, for easy maintenance.

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Bedroom designed for considerable daytime use. Two sofas flank corner table, and fit partially into cabinet containing bedding. At night they pull out to serve as beds. Small, built-in section under window provides desk, pull-out ironing board, and space for sewing. Large rotating table serves both sofa beds. Separation of activities is essential in so small a room—see plan.

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None of the traditional heart-warmers—no canopied bed, delicate night table, fluffy lamps, skirted vanity, drapes, valance, or tie-backs—and yet we consider this classic of modern design by architect Richard Neutra the most beautiful bedroom we have ever seen.

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The Bedroom for a Single Adult: This is not actually a separate problem. Basic principles of planning and furnishing are the same here as for the master bedroom, with less space needed for sleeping and dressing-storage areas and more for leisure. This is an extremely personal room; its character is determined by whether its occupant is an elderly relative, a grown son or daughter, or a guest rather than a permanent resident.

What, No Victorian?

5. We can well imagine the headshaking of many readers as they go through these pages—because for many generations the bedroom has been considered the sentimental core of the home, and, through the dictates of fashion and etiquette, has become a veritable Valentine chock-full of all the feminine goodies, the classic models being the Victorian, Colonial, and French bedrooms so popular today. It is for this reason that we pause briefly here to argue and amplify the aesthetics of our case.

If you are so enamored of the charm of other centuries that you can stand the gruesome, tawdry look of such rooms each morning and then do the work of other centuries to restore order—then have such a room. But if you really want to save work, and to have a room that properly fulfills its intended functions, you'll have to give up your dreams of living in another age and enjoy your own twentieth century.

Of course, in a room as personal as a bedroom, the occupants' personality should be expressed. And, if designed and planned properly, the simplified interiors prescribed here can serve as a flattering background to set off dramatically and effectively whatever personal touches you want. Your favorite pictures can be hung on one wall, or your favorite collection (old coins, or shells, for example) kept under glass. New coated fabrics and wall coverings enable you to surround yourself with favorite colors.

Perhaps you will have to change your ideas of charm and beauty. After all, there are lots of different kinds—Georgian and Victorian are only two brand names.

The bedrooms illustrated in this chapter are devoid of traditional furnishings . . . yet they possess qualities of charm, dignity, and a serene kind of beauty that cannot be found in traditional rooms. Learn to enjoy them.

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Bathrooms

6. This adjunct of the bedroom is probably the most-used room in the house; its planning and furnishing, therefore, should receive serious consideration—instead of being taken for granted as a standard, unalterable arrangement.

Storage is probably the most neglected item. A recent survey by the Pierce Foundation disclosed that bathrooms contain the least adequate storage space of any part of the home. So if you're planning a new bathroom, or if you're able to remodel, minimize the time and energy consumed in lugging things in and out by a built-in closet large enough to hold all bathroom supplies: toilet paper, soap, and so on; and also provide room here for all necessary cleaning materials and tools. (See Bathroom Cleaning Closet Check List, Appendix A, page 192.)

Fixtures: The standard medicine cabinet is often sadly inadequate, too. Consider installing an oversized one, or having several—perhaps one just for cosmetics, if this serves as a dressing room.

A stall shower will eliminate the water-splashing that's inevitable with a tub shower. If possible, have the floor level of the stall below that of the rest of the room, and have a sliding glass door rather than shower curtains.

A closed-in bathtub, if possible—square ones provide seating space at the corners and are helpful for dressing, washing feet, or bathing young children.

If the bathroom is used by adults only, you can save back-bending by having your washbowl higher than the standard 30 inches—we find 40 inches best for us.

If it's a family bathroom, consider dividing it in three: shower or bathtub compartment, with door; toilet closet, with door; lavatory or washbasin section. Fixtures will cost no more than usual, and the space required need be little more than for the standard arrangement. If this isn't practical, consider having two washbasins, if there is room for them.

Lighting: Have the simplest, most washable fixtures. We prefer the tubular incandescent type, which is so easy to clean, installed either across the top or at the sides of the mirror above the washbasin. The most practical location for the electrical outlet is alongside the basin, on a level with the top. For general lighting: a flush, or diffuse direct, ceiling fixture, so constructed that the glass can easily be removed.

Floor: Most easily cleaned is glazed, vitreous tile in a dark color.

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Consider a drain, so it can be hosed, with no wiping necessary.

Walls: In a room exposed to such extreme changes in atmosphere and temperature, these should never be painted; paper or other coverings are apt to peel. Vitreous tile or glass is most practical.

Furnishings: These should be as carefully planned and worked out as in a ship's galley—with nothing superfluous. The fancy curtained, over-decorated bathroom soon becomes a travesty of the rest of the house. Our formula is: light-colored tile and fixtures (they show spots less quickly); dark floor; ceiling, window and trim painted a bright color. Solid colors throughout, with no curtains or decorations.

Work-Saving Bathroom Furnishings

An adequate-sized hamper, preferably the built-in, bin type.

A step-on garbage can; more sanitary than a wastebasket; or, ideal, a rubbish chute.

A towel rack for *each* member of the family (with a name plate over it), long enough to hold the full, unfolded width of the towel, if possible.

A labeled towel rack for guests, and paper guest towels.

A paper-cup dispenser, eliminating washing glasses, and more sanitary.

A paper towel holder, saving laundry, and handy for immediate wiping up of anything spilled.

A holder for facial tissues.

A bath-mat bar—of an adequate size, to discourage leaving the mat on the floor, or over the edge of a just-cleaned bathtub (into which it's apt to shake dust, talcum powder, etc.).

Individual unbreakable containers—a plastic box or bread basket will do—for tooth paste, toothbrush, shaving articles, comb, brush, etc. These prevent clutter, and they're more likely to be used by your family than the medicine cabinet.

Soap dishes (with removable plastic insert for easy cleaning); a cellulose sponge here, too, to encourage cleaning of tub and basin by each user.

Pegs or hooks on the walls, to hold shower caps, back-scrubbers, a young child's seat cover —all paraphernalia that's frequently used and otherwise might clutter the floor, basin, bathtub corners, etc.

If you have small children: a shelf with a raised front edge over the bathtub, for boats, rubber toys, etc.

If you can't avoid doing personal laundry in the bathroom, because of space problems, at least install fold-down metal or plastic drying racks on the wall; or rig up a pull-down ceiling drier over the tub—so you won't have to use towel racks.

For shower curtains, plastic film is the most satisfactory material. It dries quickly, and soap, which is a medium for bacteria-causing mildew, can easily be wiped off it. Fabric-backed plastics tend to peel; water-repellent fabrics catch water and soap in their hems, and mildew.

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The Child's Room

7. Planning the Nursery: It should be close to the mother's room, bright and sunny, and big. Often we think of a child's room as small because the child is small, and then wonder where to put bath, scales, high chair, playpen, and accumulating toys. It is important to store all clothing together, and all equipment for feeding and bathing together—each clearly separated from the other. Most important is plenty of clear floor space.

Floor

Linoleum, rubber tile, greaseproof asphalt tile, and latex-bonded terrazzo (1), are desirable floor surfaces, being smooth-surfaced, resilient, and easy to clean (see the Floor Chart for others). Choose mottled rather than plain, dark rather than light, colors.

A permanent rug isn't necessary here. However, when the child is learning to walk, a large short-piled rug, or a washable cotton rug or carpeting, in a fairly dark color, will soften his falls and help him get a grip on the floor.

Walls

For thoroughly washable wall materials, resistant to stains and to scuffing by furniture and toys, consult the Wall Chart. Some on which a child can draw, which quickly wash clean whether he writes with chalk, crayon, pastels, or water paints (encourage crayons and water paints; chalk makes dust), include alkyd-resin-base enamel paint (26), plastic-coated paper or fabric, and the Plus-Lite Board (52), a white blackboard that takes crayon.

Windows

Surely, you want no frilly curtains on the windows here. Your aims are light control and guarding against drafts and sifting dust.

Roller blinds of wood slats (53), or plastic-coated fabric (54), or shades that draw from the sill upward (see Window Coverings, Chapter V, page 99).

Draw curtains, window-sill length, tubbable or plastic material.

A ventilator across the lower part of the window, of aluminum (55), rather than glass for safety reasons; no sharp edges.

One-room air-conditioning if the budget can stand it, for cleanliness and work-saving even more than for temperature. (The baby's doctor should be consulted first; he might not approve keeping the nursery much cooler than the rest of the house in hot weather.)

Lighting

Floor and table lamps with their trailing wires are dangerous. Electric outlets should, if possible, be placed high on the wall above a child's reach. Two light fixtures are basic:

An overhead fixture for general illumination, indirect type, of simple design for easy cleaning.

A night light with bulb of low wattage or blue tint, fastened on the wall at adult height, near enough to the crib to throw light there but out of reach of the child when old enough to stand up.

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Furniture for the Nursery: The first two years of a child's life are full of strenuous physical experiment: crawling, standing up, walking, climbing. To spare him bumps and frustrations, and his parents anxiety, have all furniture with flush or rounded corners, sturdy, and with nothing loose or hanging or unstable to be pulled down or overturned. Everything from floor to ceiling should be washable. This is an obvious first thought (too often it is also the last). But it does not have to mean a hospital look. There is no good reason for baby furniture to be always anemic white, pink, or blue. You can wash a bright-red chest or crib as clean as a pale one.

Cribs

The frilly bassinet, so soon obsolete, is a waste of money; laundering its trimmings is a waste of labor. Its virtues are its height, and the way you can wheel or carry it around the house. A washbasket with strong handles or mounted on a stand with casters serves as well. But you don't need either, with the right crib.

wooden crib rather than metal, either in a natural wood finish (see Table-top Chart for the right finish) or painted in hard enamel *without lead*; babies, like puppies, chew.

crib in which the surface of the bed itself can be raised and lowered, as well as the sides. The high bed is a back-saver during infancy, and can be lowered when the child is standing up so that the sides are high enough for his safety. A less expensive way to raise the bed is to mount an ordinary crib on wooden blocks, removable later.

crib on wheels with screened top and sides, if there is a terrace or porch where it can be wheeled out for the daily airing. This may replace the big costly perambulator, which is hard to get up and down stairs, takes up space, and is an extra cleaning chore. Later a stroller will serve for walks.

ood rollers or wheels on any type of crib. If you want to move the baby around the house, check the width of your doors before buying a crib with this in mind.

Infant bedding is standard and apparently irreducible. For the useless show pillow, substitute plastic-covered padding now made in bolster-like pieces (56) to fit around all sides of the crib. Crib sheets come with ready-made mitered corners (43) to fit over the mattress, or you can sew corners on.

Storage

We have never seen factory-made storage pieces that really fit a baby's wardrobe. The small drawers in standard nursery chests are too big for orderly arrangement of infant clothes, the big drawers are too small for bulky bed linens. The compartment for hanging clothes is wasted for the first year, when the best-dressed

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modern baby wears nothing that can't be folded into a drawer. And the small surface area is inadequate counter space. Suggestions:

Infant Clothing Storage

Built-in wall storage with partitioned drawers is efficient, space-saving, and not likely to be more expensive than good baby furniture.

Of the ready-made pieces, a couple of adult-size unit chests with small and large drawers (partition them yourself) are more satisfactory than standard nursery chests. Matching toy shelves can be added later.

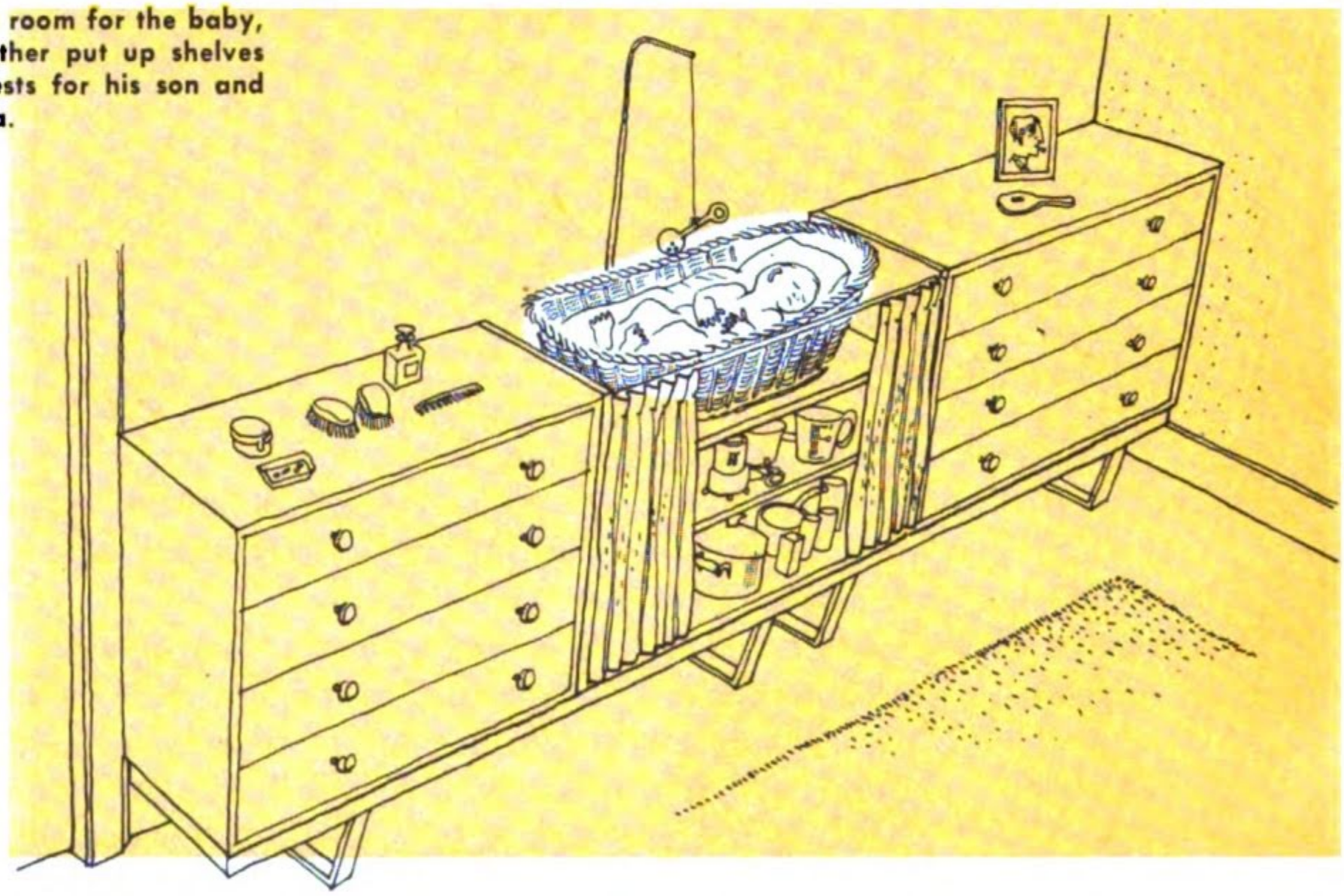
If a nursery chest is bought, be sure the hanging compartment has a shelf, or shelves, for blankets, carriage robes, etc., removable later.

For nursery equipment (bath, scales, etc.) use the hanging compartment of a built-in closet, or the normal bedroom closet in the room, or a curtained-off corner of the room for a clutter closet.

A work surface: counter or table of convenient counter height, with shallow drawers like pull-out trays to hold the dozen small items needed in bathing, dressing, feeding, changing; this has yet to be produced commercially—you can perhaps make or improvise one. It will need a waterproof top (see Table-top Chart).

The latest folding bathinette (57) is a godsend for bathing infants. It can hold all the numerous articles that you need for this task, which must be done carefully, efficiently, and quickly. Folded, it can find a place in the smallest room.

With no separate room for the baby, one ingenious father put up shelves between two chests for his son and his paraphernalia.



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Other Nursery Furniture

A high chair or a chair table.
A playpen: one with a floor of its own, raised a few inches off the floor of the room as a protection against cold and drafts, and on casters. Plastic cover for the pad.
A comfortable low chair or two for adults, upholstered in plastic or plastic-coated fabric.
An adult bed for the mother or the nurse during a child's illness; box spring and mattress on legs only—no hard corners. Cover it with a washable spread.

If space limitations require turning part of the parents' bedroom into a nursery, the leisure area will of course have to be converted. This will mean using only the most essential articles of baby furniture, utilizing leisure-area shelf and storage space for the layette, and above all putting up a screen to shield the baby from the lights that will be on in the room while he is asleep.

Toddler-to-Teen Room: Learning is childhood's work, and young children learn by playing. A good many of the clashes that devour a mother's energy, and frustrate the child's natural drive to learn, can be avoided if the child's play is treated with respect and planned for in his own room.

Toys and Toy Storage

Have a clear floor space, not a passageway, where unfinished construction or other work in progress can be left overnight, or even for days.
Provide adequate storage space *within the child's reach*, so that he can put his own things away. This should be open shelves; it makes cleanup easier, and drawers are difficult for a young child to open. Have some deep shelves, 18 inches high, for larger toys and games.
Have a junk box or corner: one space or container where the child can pile things in any order or none, where he can store odd collections that are precious to him at the moment. Be sure the lid is lightweight and will stay open, if it's a chest; or have it open door-fashion in the front. Collapsible chests of heavy cardboard are good, inexpensive junk boxes.
Provide a sturdy rectangular stool that he can carry or push around to where he needs it. He will be less tempted to climb where he shouldn't and pull things down by accident in an effort to reach them.
Hollow-block furniture (58), very new, can be built—perhaps by the child alone, or with help – into toy shelves, worktables, storage bins, steps for climbing. Construction can be temporary or permanent, and revised with the child's growth. Worktable tops are available for them, with hardy surfaces of inlaid linoleum. A hollow block on casters is a wagon to carry blocks or toys across the room; upside down, it is a sturdy climbing tool; with a square foam-rubber

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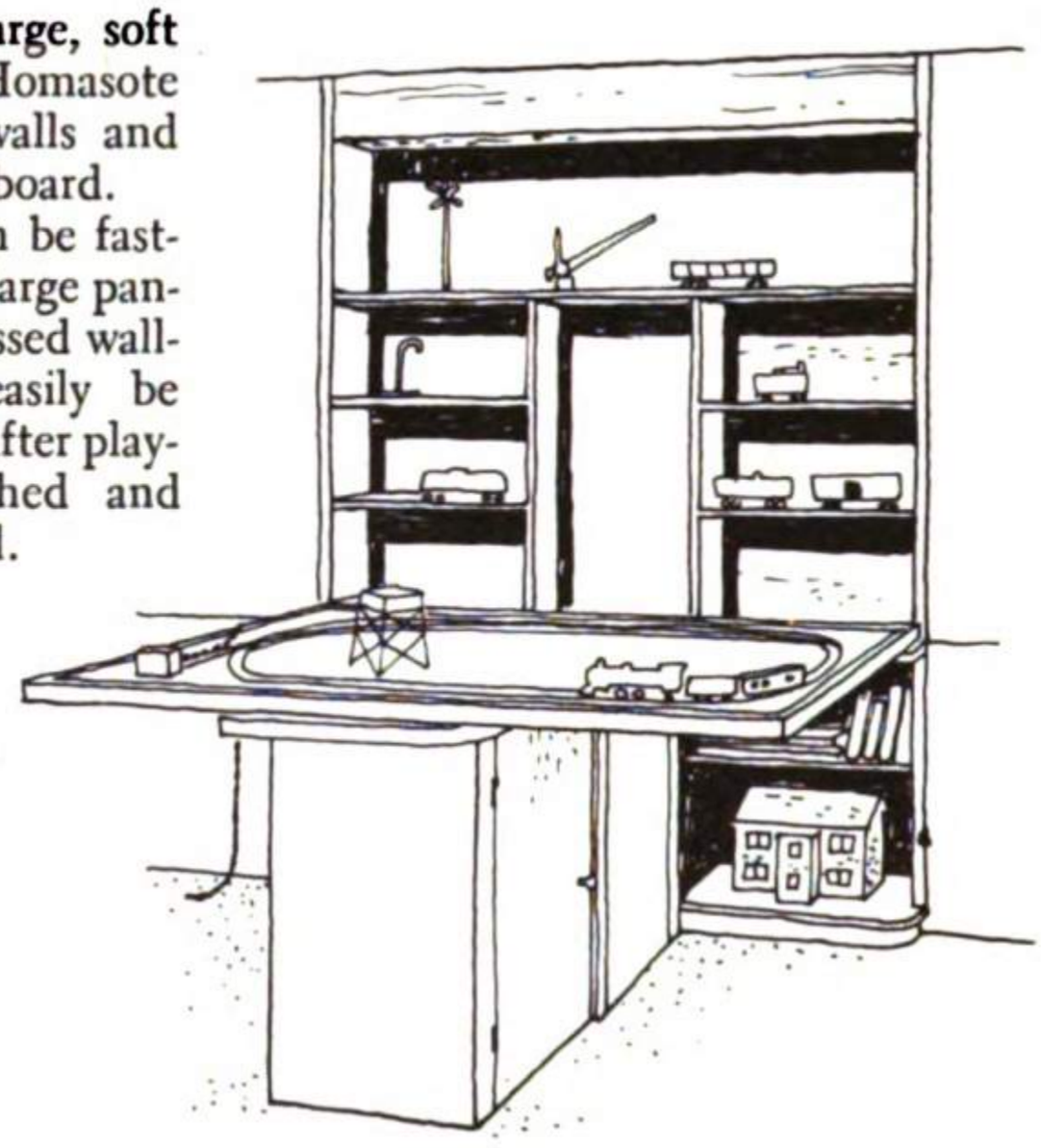
cushion added it is a comfortable seat.

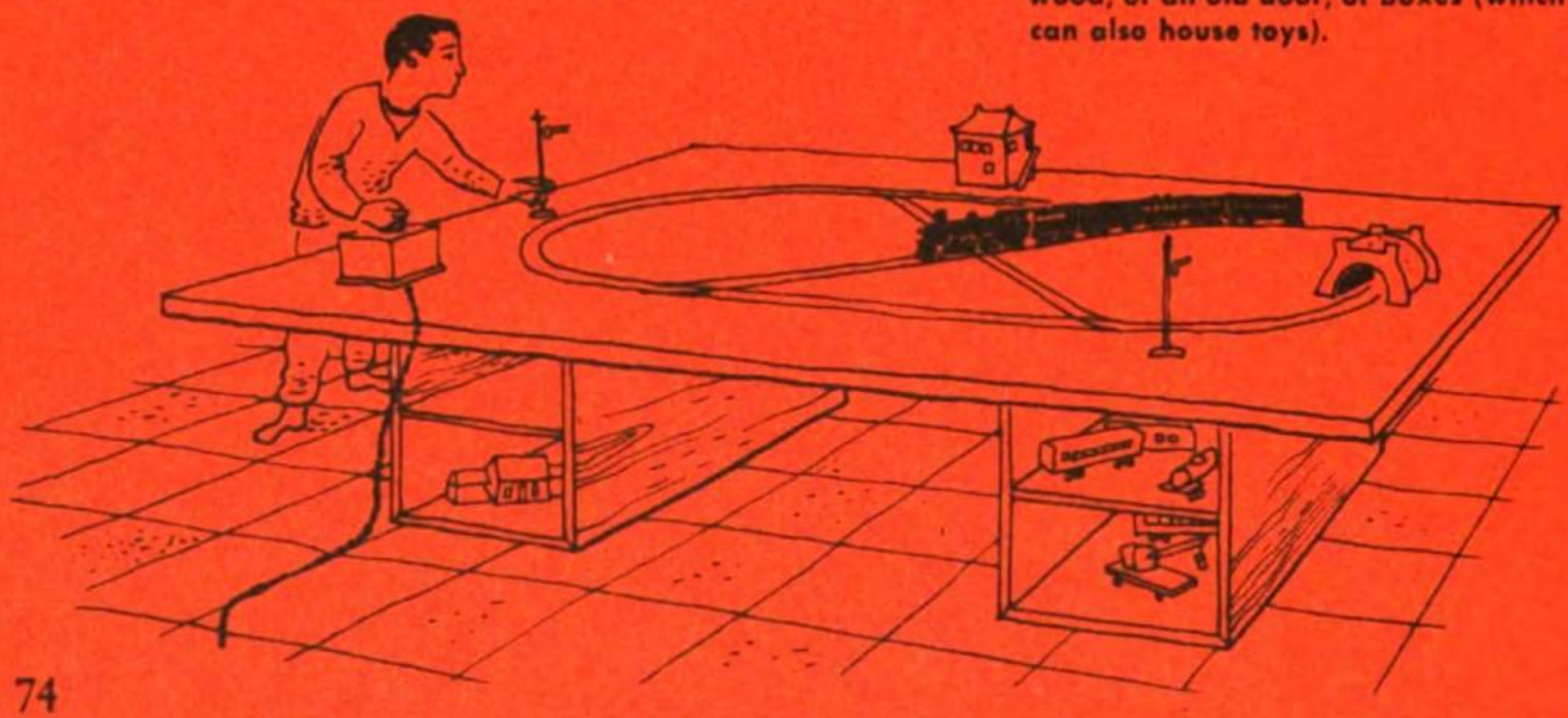
Attach to the wall a large, soft wallboard, such as Homasote (59)—it saves the walls and can serve as a pin-up board.

Electric train tracks can be fastened to two or more large panels of plywood or pressed wallboard; these can easily be joined together, and after playtime can be detached and stacked against a wall.



For electric trains, the track is attached to one side of a large panel, which swings up to form the door of a train-and-toy storage cupboard. Designed by Joseph Aronson.

To avoid a lot of nursery pickup: a ping-pong table, or a piece of ¾ plywood, or an old door, or boxes (which can also house toys).



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The planned built-in clothes storage of the nursery, or the bank of unit chests, will continue to serve the child as they did the infant. If the child can begin now to learn good habits in caring for his own possessions, it will mean eventual laborsaving for the mother—so be patient during the learning period and provide him with storage he can cope with:

Clothes Storage

Let the bar in the closet be low enough to permit the child to reach it and hang his own clothes himself. A series of sockets at 6-inch intervals upward can be put in now, and the bar raised as he grows.

Drawers in clothes chests should be low and slide easily, should be roomy enough for their contents, and departmentalized to help the child in getting out his own clean things. Paste a cutout on each drawer, representing the clothes within.

Drawers should also be pegged at the inside edges so they don't pull out and dump everything, including the child, on the floor.

The crib is replaced by a 5-foot youth's bed with removable sides. (Resist the temptation to outfit a room used for two children with a cute double-decker bunk; it means most laborious bedmaking.)

When school age arrives, you'll need some new furniture: desk, workbench, bookshelves, a dollhouse for a girl. Select them for sturdy construction and stainproof finish, and begin now to plan in terms of the orderly subdivisions of an adult room.

The Teen-Age Son or Daughter: The room-of-one's-own impulse is powerful from adolescence on—a place for study, for visits from best friends, for radio and phonograph listening without protest from the family—and where the impulse can be successfully met, family harmony is served. The housewife gets her reward, too. A young person in whose room there is a place for everything is likely to put at least some things back in their places.

The same recommendations for sleeping and dressing arrangements, and storage planning, apply here as in the master bedroom. Most important here are the extracurricular uses of the room, an expanded leisure area. To keep this from becoming a major housekeeping headache, it is essential to *departmentalize*, keeping each activity strictly in its own space: dressing, hobbies, study. Use the sturdiest, most practical materials for *all* furnishings—from desk to draperies.

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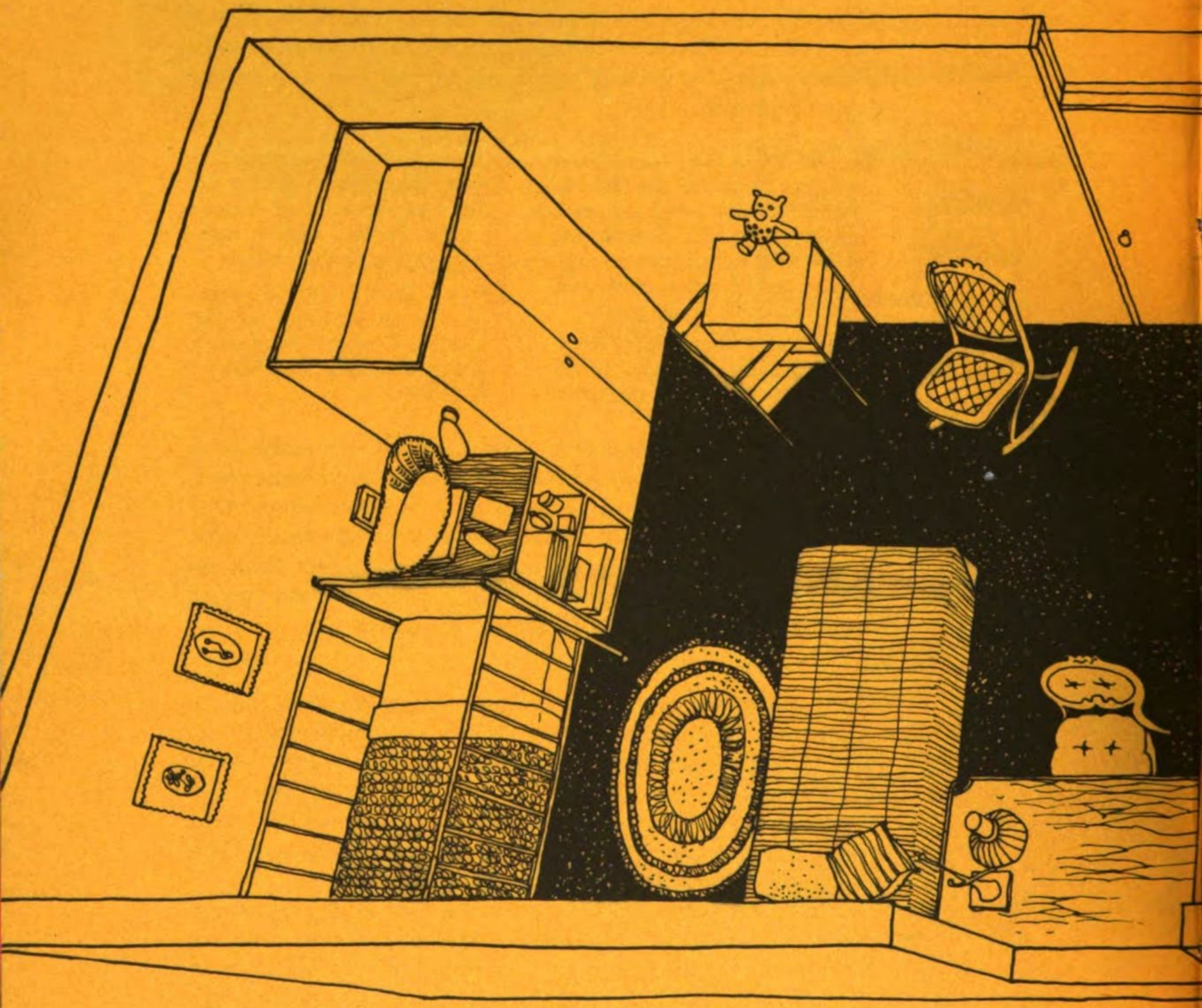

A studio bed for mother to rest on or sleep in on those nights of sickness; marble table top, rocking chair, and closet or chest with lots of small drawers are timesavers when the child is a baby.

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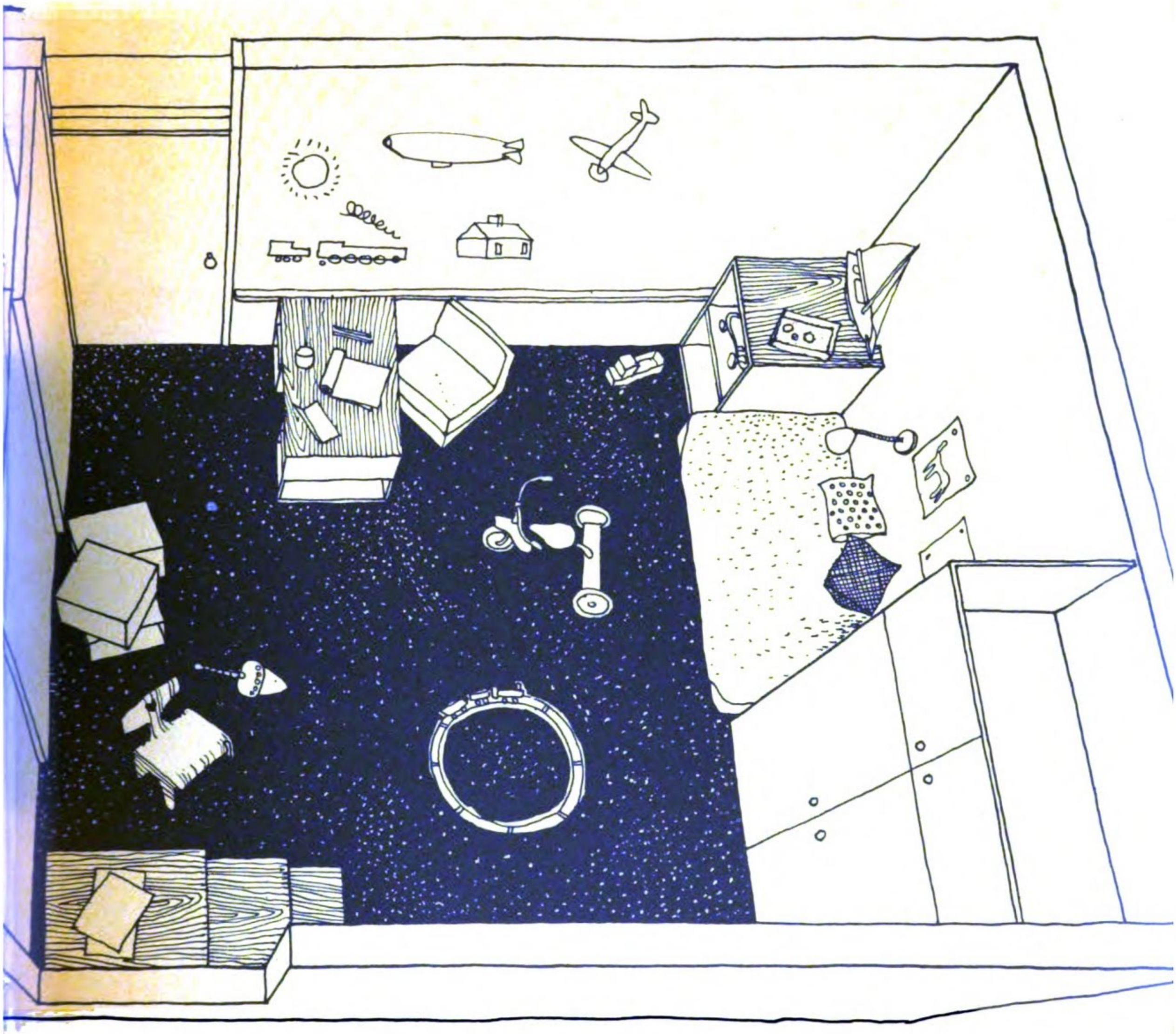

Plan the nursery to grow with the child. Here a large room is divided by a sliding partition into two rooms for two children. Begin with latex-bonded terrazzo on the floor and washable wall covering. In the infants' room, two simple sections of wall storage, rollers on furniture. At the "toddler" stage, a youth bed replaces the crib.

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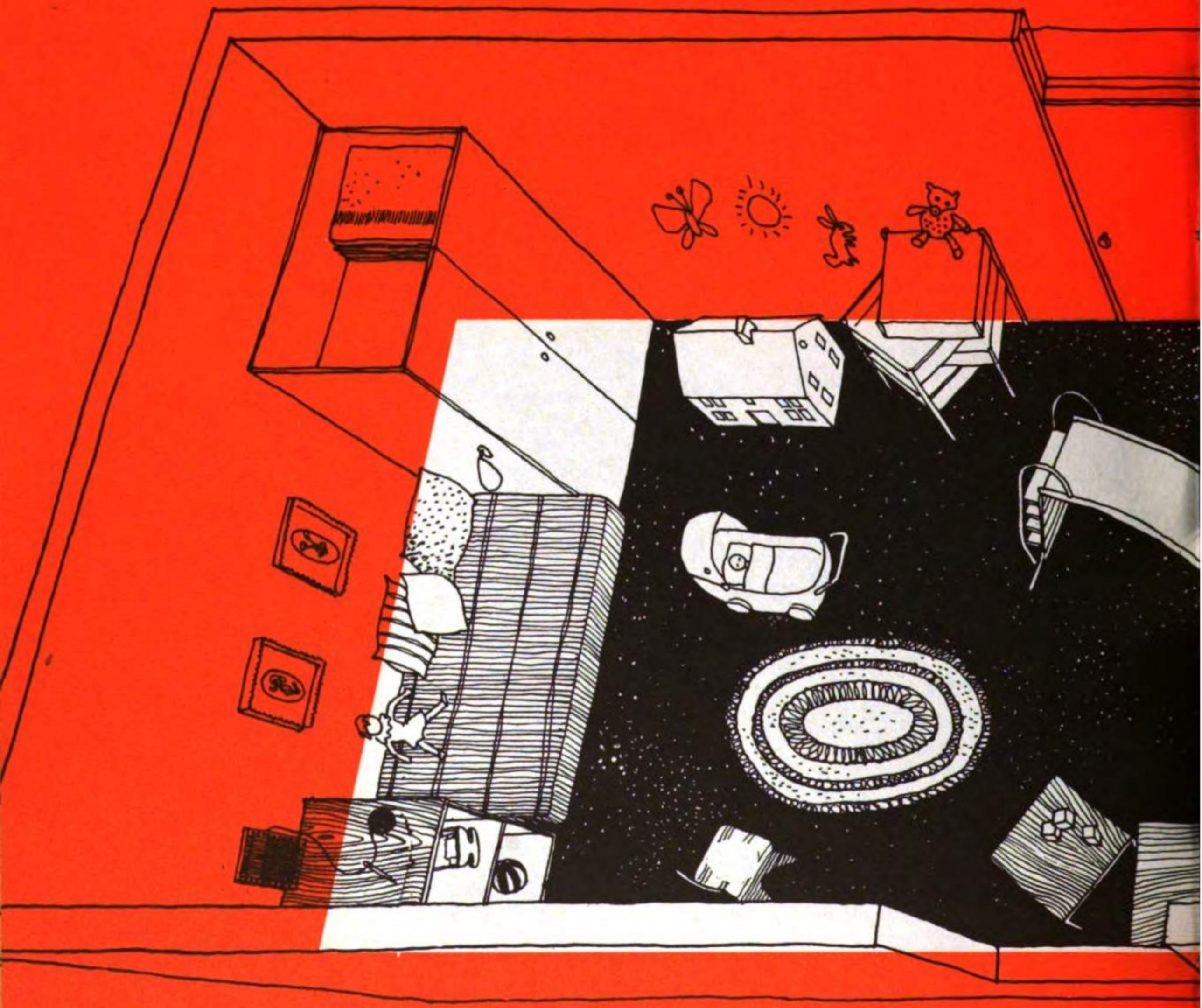

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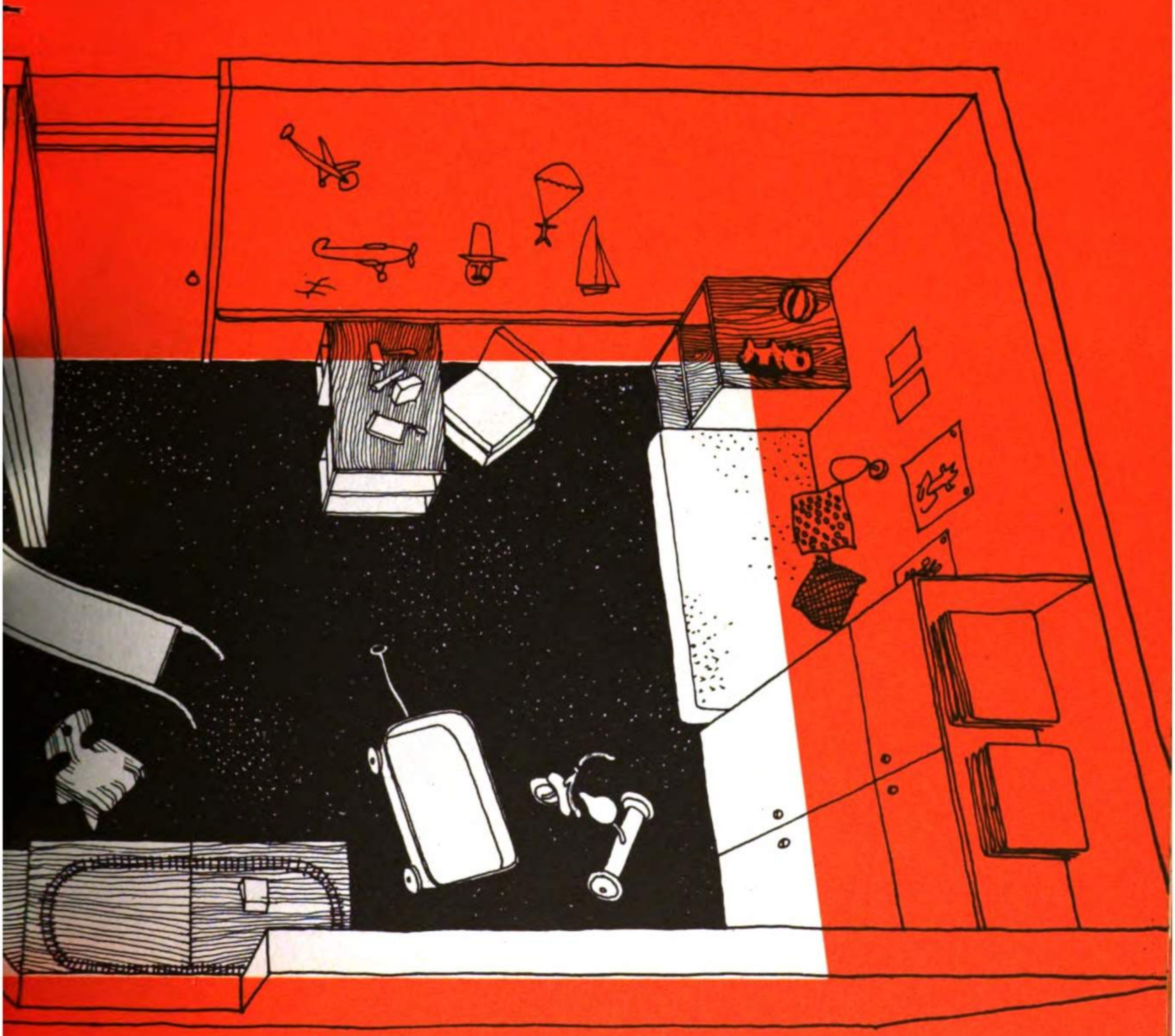

In the second, or "rough-and-tumble" stage, the partition may be rolled back to provide a large play space. Together, the two rooms sketched measure only 25 by 11 feet. Note walls treated to withstand childhood art efforts (52); sturdy, simple, hollow block furniture (58); the swinging wardrobe; the absence of table and floor lamps.

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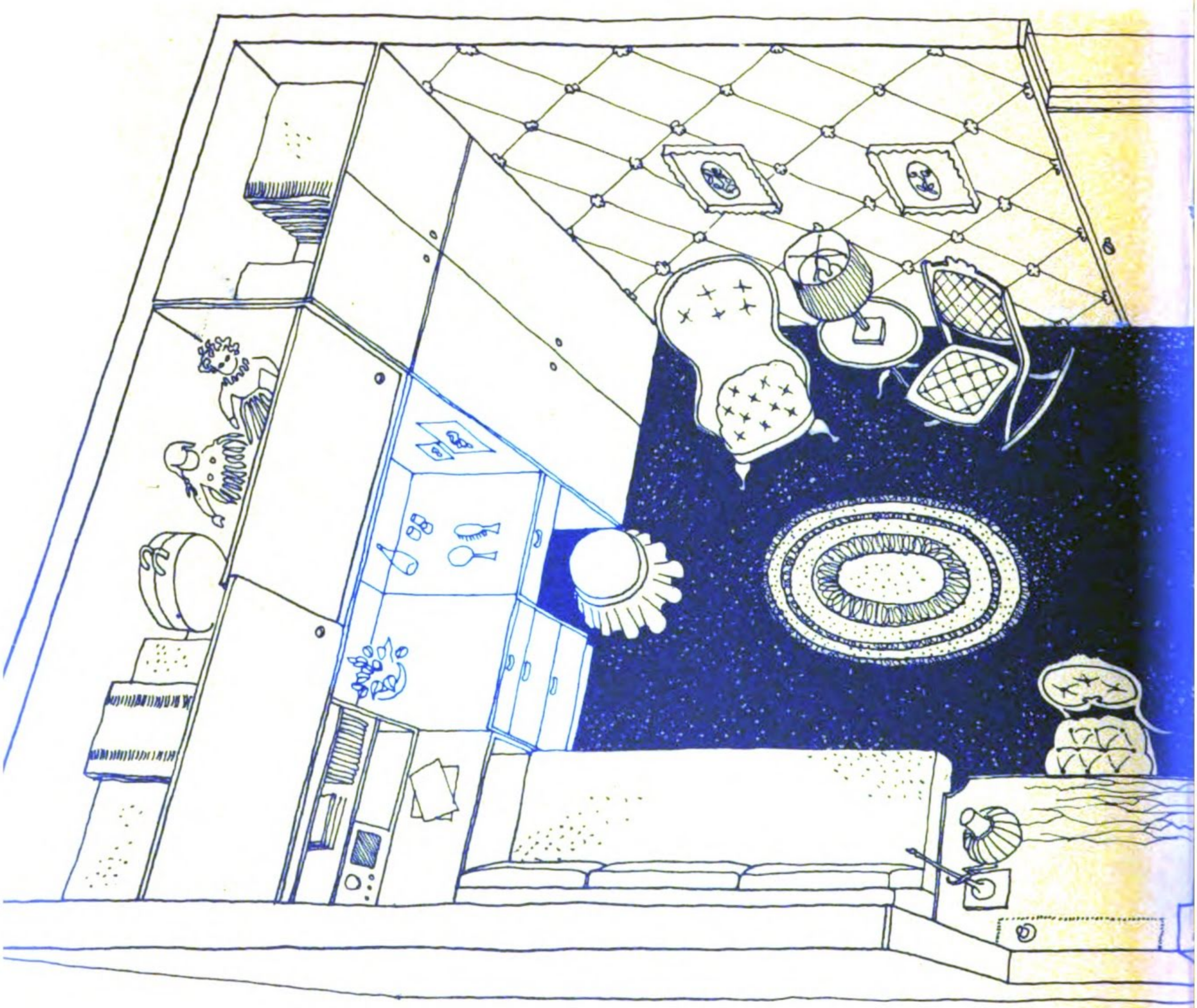

To make housekeeping the teen-age room easier, departmentalize the activities by arrangement. Notice, here, how dressing, sleeping, and study are separated.

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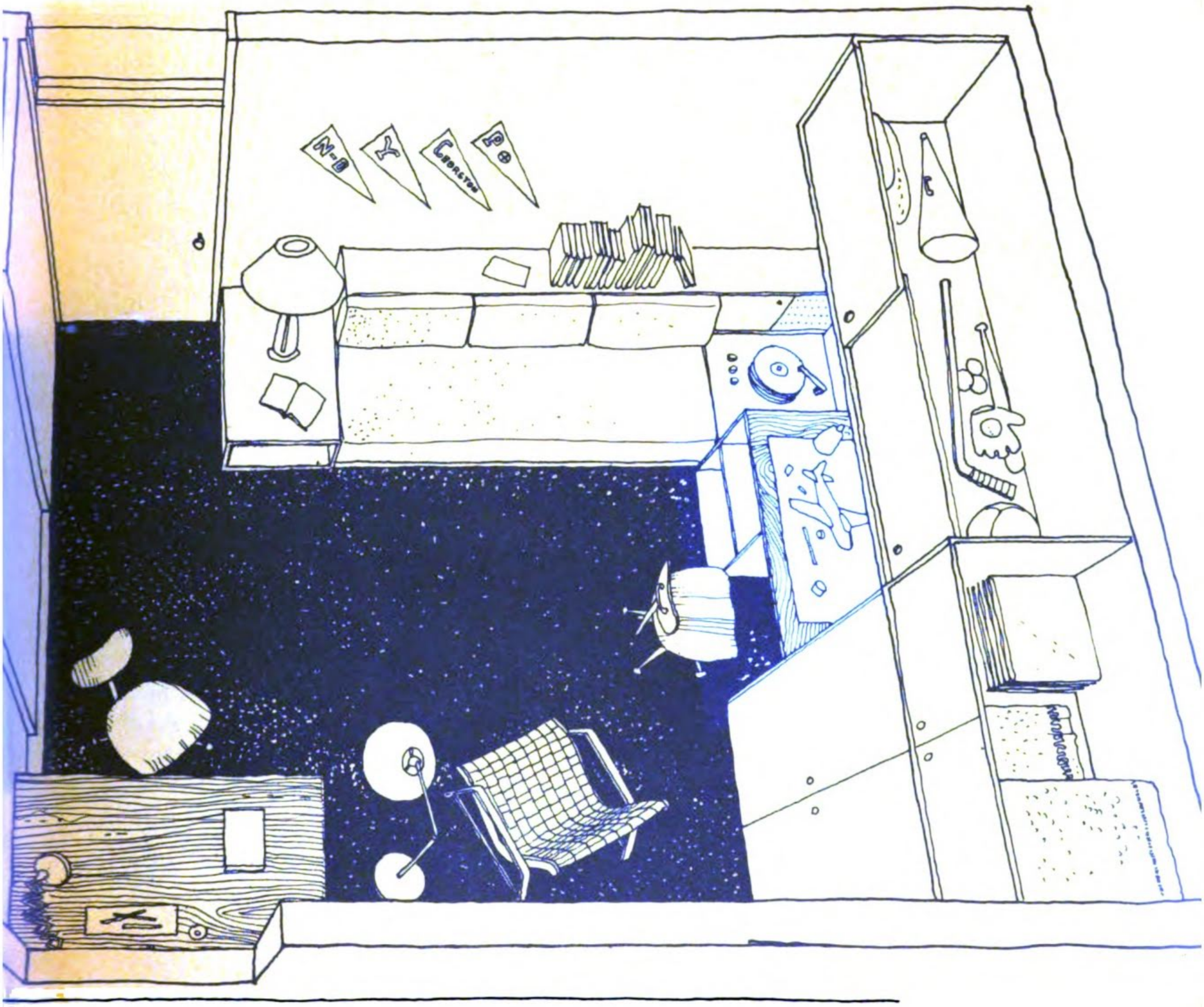

In the final stage, the partition is permanently closed; wall storage is completed to include a work section for teen-age boy, a vanity for girl. Colors and added furnishings now indicate individual personality.

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CHAPTER V

ALL AROUND THE HOUSE

NOTHING IS MORE EXASPERATING to the housewife who has just finished her labors, who has won the battle against every sign of dust and upheaval within her home, than that awful moment when the outer door is flung open and family or friends carry in mud, dirt, and disorder from the outside. Nothing—unless perhaps it is the perplexing discovery that, in some mysterious way, dust or soot has filtered through the windows to soil or ruin walls and furniture.

So this chapter is largely concerned with the important problem of controlling this dirt and dust that enter by way of doors, windows, and hallways. Also considered, as closely related matters, are the doors and stairways inside the house.

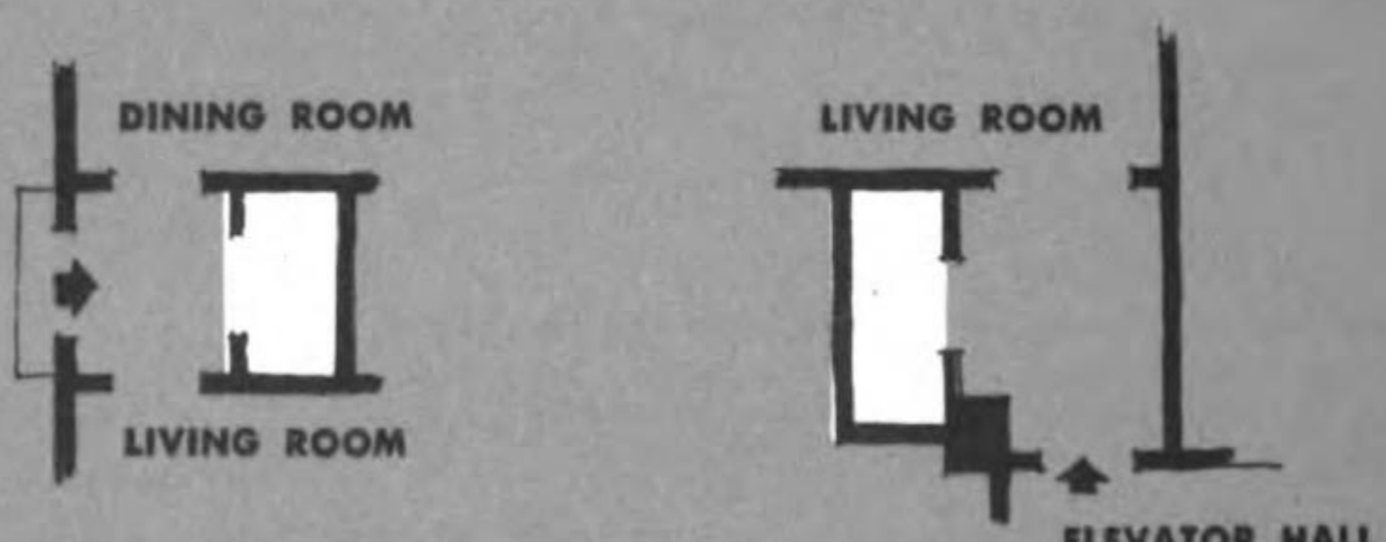
This may seem primarily a chapter for builders and homeowners. But dwellers in apartments and rented houses will find help here too, in the furnishing of a foyer or the improvement of its closet, and the section on window coverings and draperies is for everyone.

Entrances

1. The entrance areas can be effective blockades against outdoor dirt. Modern architects, in rebellion against the clichéd design of old-fashioned entrance halls, have tended to abolish not only the hallway but the foyer as well, and open the front door right into the living room. This carries a good idea too far.

The Front Door and Foyer Area: To do its job properly, this area should make it almost impossible for anyone to come in without

Plans for entrance foyers, showing location of closets



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wiping feet, putting down packages, and putting away coat, hat, scarf, umbrella, rubbers, galoshes, and the like, and conversely should make it easy for them to find their possessions on the way out. It must also be easy to clean and to keep in order. A lavatory here is a good idea, too, for family as well as guests, to avoid tracking outdoor dirt all the way to a bathroom.

Certainly not carpeting, and not even linoleum or asphalt or rubber tile is recommended for the floor here, but a hard surface that can be swept, mopped, or even hosed if you have a drain here.

Floor

Stone, marble, terrazzo (1), ceramic tile, or magnesite (3), of a dark color, mottled.

Cove baseboard and corners in the same material.

A door mat, large enough so that one has to step on it, and of a material that really wipes shoes, preferably sunk flush with the floor just *inside* the door. Foot scrapers are often ignored, rubber and metal mats inefficient. Coco matting is the most aggressive shoe-wiper. It's the one we recommend, although it needs occasional beating and cleaning, and is not especially durable, having to be replaced from time to time.

An outdoor mat may also be of coco matting, though it will not survive many months of exposure. More durable though less efficient, is a metal mat of the chain-link kind, or a deeply embossed rubber mat.

Both an indoor and an outdoor mat will be helpful for most of the year.

Walls

Pick a really washable wall material from the Wall Chart, one which not only is easy to clean but also is rain-resistant. Rounded corners for foyer and closet walls are desirable, but expensive.

Foyer Furniture

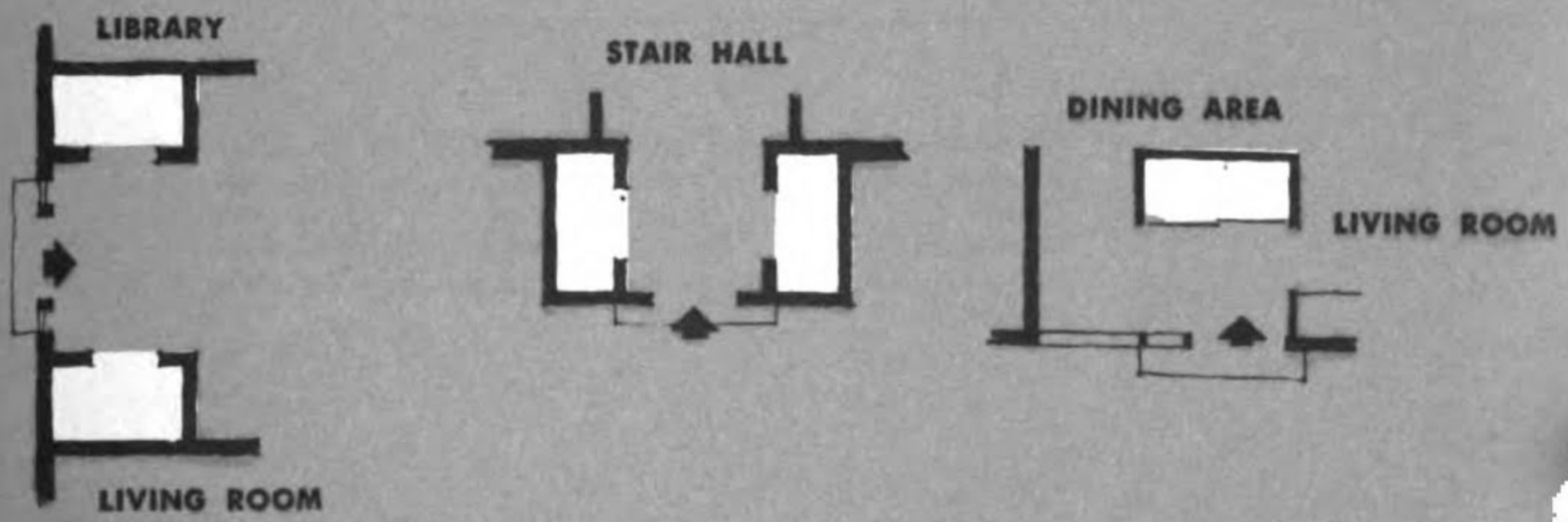
Have *no* furniture here, except—

A shelf for putting things down, rather than a table with legs that impede cleaning.

A mirror above this, preferably without a frame to clean.

A bench to sit on for putting on and taking off overshoes, sturdy enough for a young child to stand on for help with a snowsuit.

An umbrella rack with drain.



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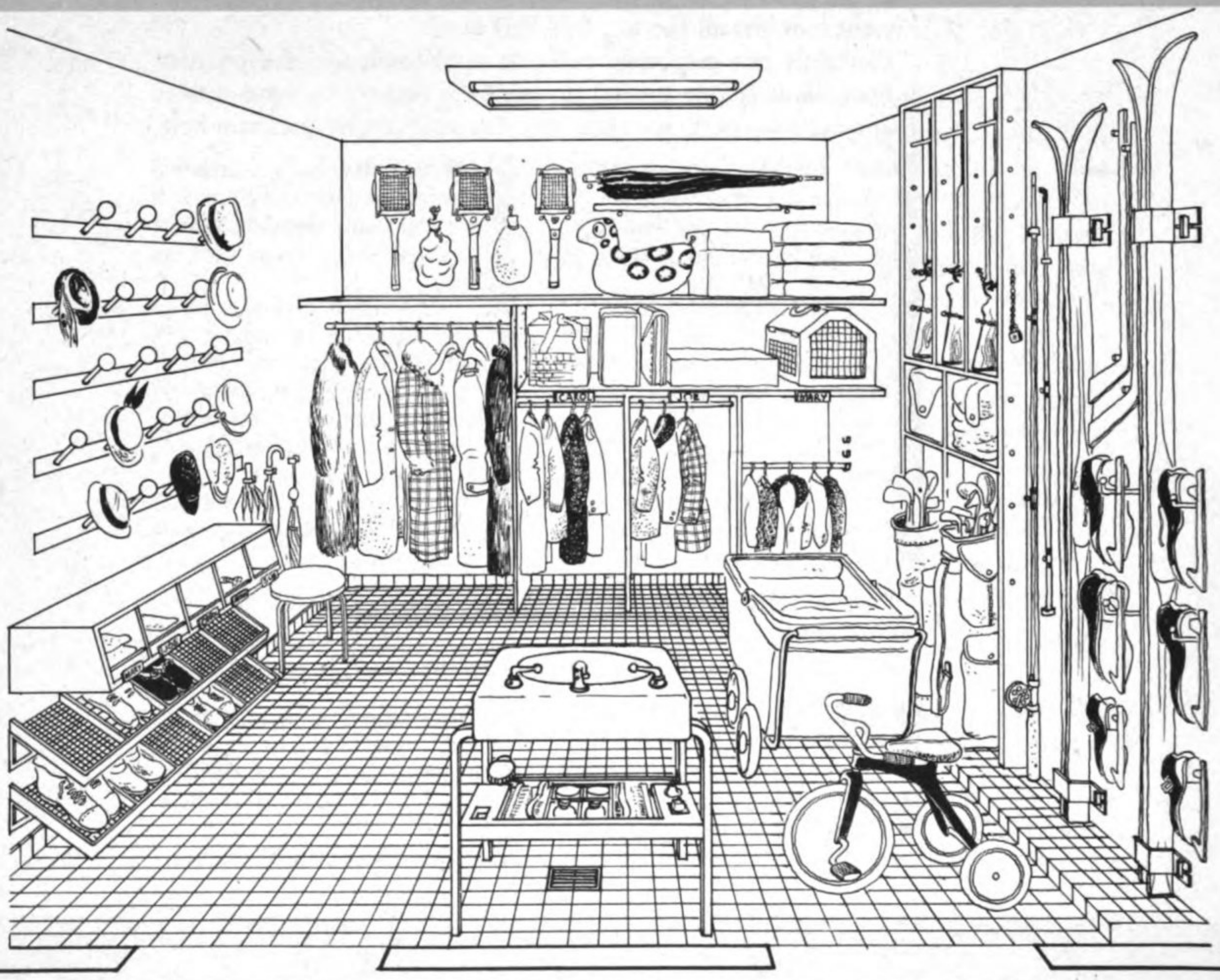
The Entrance Closet is the heart of the foyer. The usual hall closet —too small, too dark, too far from the door, lacking any convenience beyond hooks and a hat shelf—becomes a squirrel's nest of



"Dream" entrance closet. Walk-in closet with two doors for a family living in the country. Tile floor, low rods for childrens' use, name-tagged compartments for gloves and scarves, raised wire shelves for overshoes, shoeshine pull-out tray under the sink, a wall for sports equipment, lots of light.

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tangled clothing and jumbled overshoes, so that the members of the family shy at using it, and scatter wearing apparel all through the house.

The ideal closet is directly opposite the door, and large enough to walk into, even to wheel in the baby buggy or a bicycle. Even if you must make do with an existing closet that is smaller, you can probably make it useful with some of these ideal closet features:

Improving Smaller Closets

Paint it white inside—use alkyd enamel (26), or see the Wall Chart.

Light it below as well as above.

Arrange shelves, rods, and other fixtures within easy reach, no higher than 6 feet, the bottom one no lower than 8 inches from the floor.

For small children, have separate shelves, rod, or hooks within *their* reach.

Label the places where things go, if not for each person, at least for the children.

Have separate bins for each pair of rubbers or galoshes, with bottoms of screening or perforated metal, so that dirt drops through to one place on the floor for easier cleaning, instead of collecting in the bin.

Have a long, shallow, partitioned drawer or shelf for gloves, scarves, earmuffs, hoods, and caps.

Have pegs, high or low, for hanging sports equipment like golf bags, hockey sticks, skates, skis, and a bin or a drawer for balls and baseball gloves. The amount of available space will dictate whether all sports equipment can be stored here, or the children's more plentiful equipment in their rooms, or all of it elsewhere.

A shelf above is a poor solution for hats; hang them in racks on the underside of a shelf (7), or on pegs on a vertical wall, or on the back of the door.

Look into ready-made closet space-savers; some suggestions are made in the preceding chapter, under Clothes Storage.

A closet too shallow to walk into, which is difficult to use because it has a narrow doorway, can be made more practical by tearing down the door and adjoining wall to make the opening extend the entire width of the closet space (provided it is not a bearing wall; that is, one which helps hold up the house). Install sliding doors, or double doors opening out, to cover this entire opening. Or hang a drape or a screen; perhaps a bamboo-slat curtain that is drawn vertically or horizontally, as you prefer.

Even with strictly utilitarian purposes, the entrance can and should express the spirit of the home to which it is the threshold. It can have a pleasant informality, be gay and striking, or be dignified, if you, your architect or designer, select and carefully combine the materials and colors used on floor, walls, doors, and ceiling.

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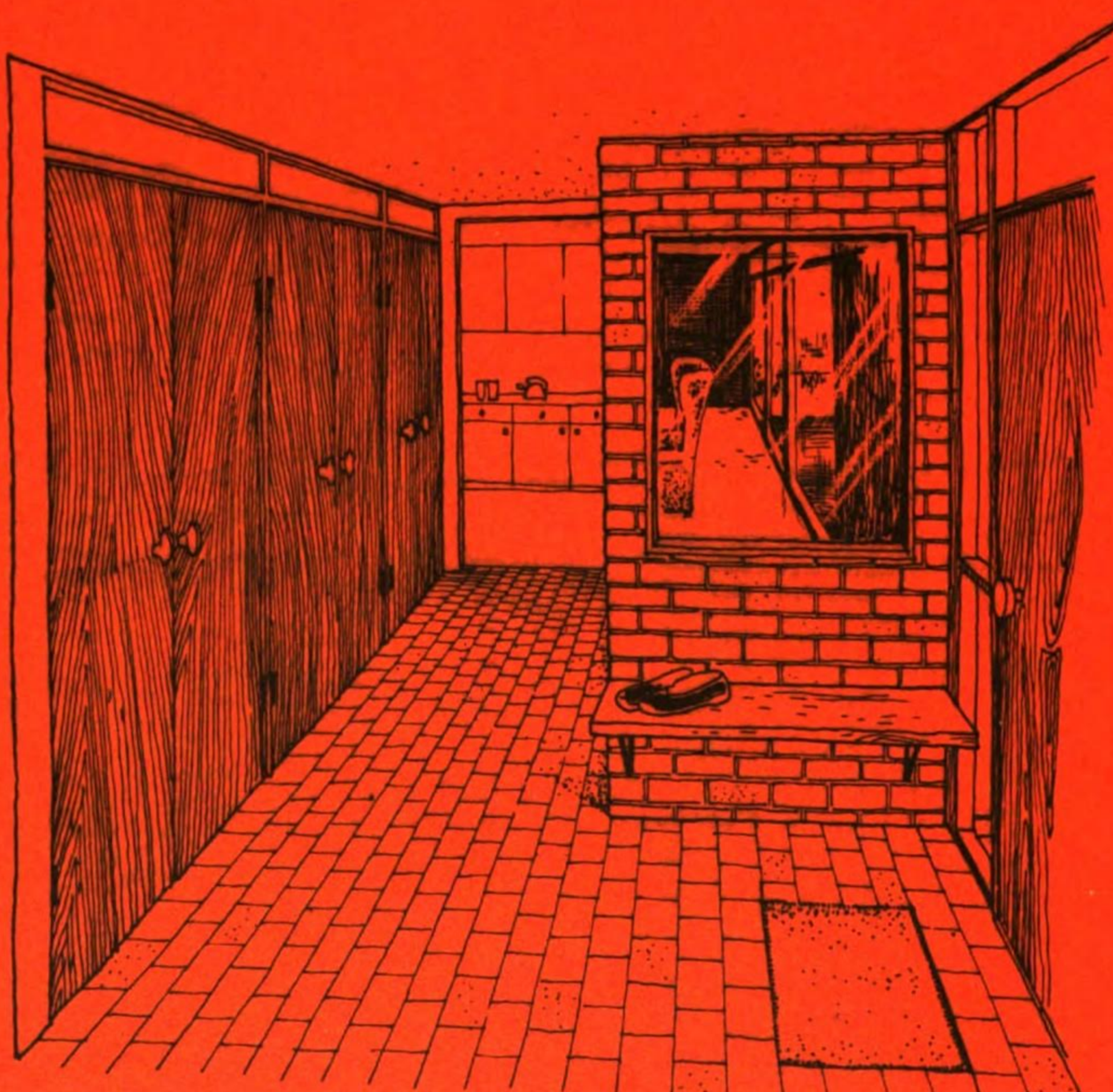

Practical and attractive entrance for a country or suburban home—brick floor with sunken mat, a bench without legs, and lots of closet space directly facing the entrance door.

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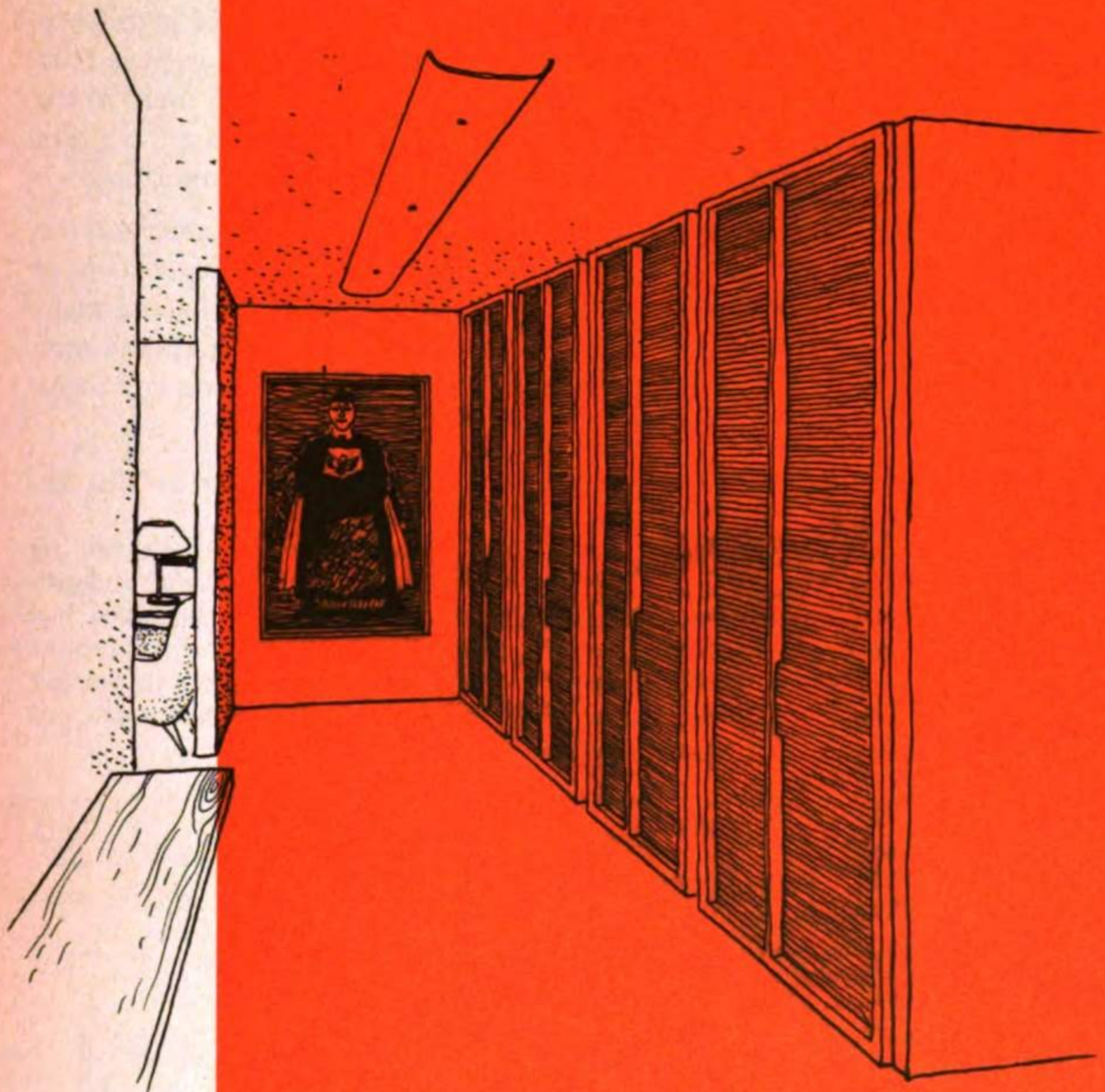

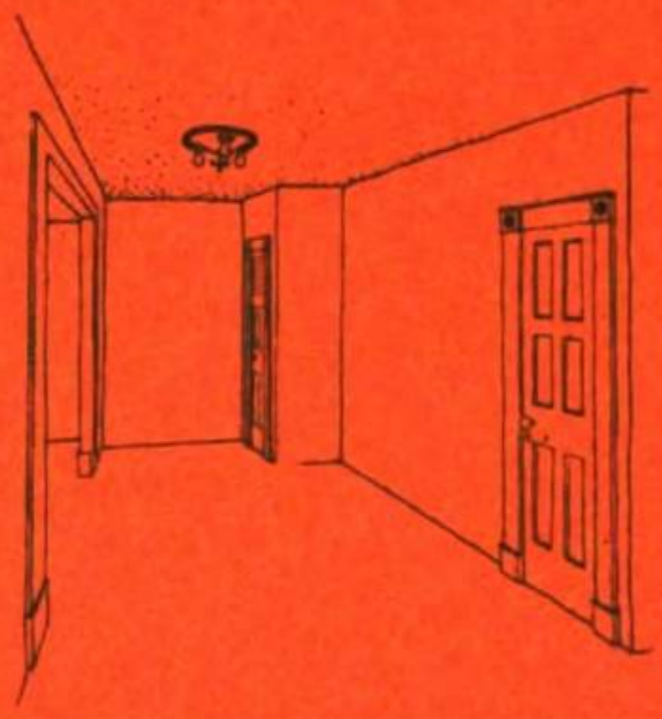

Typical entrance hall in a five-room city apartment (shown in small sketch), was converted into a handsome and useful foyer by the addition of a long row of demountable closets, with separate compartments for outdoor wear, general storage, and sports equipment, and a guest section. Note also the bench at the left and the long fluorescent ceiling light with frosted-glass covering.

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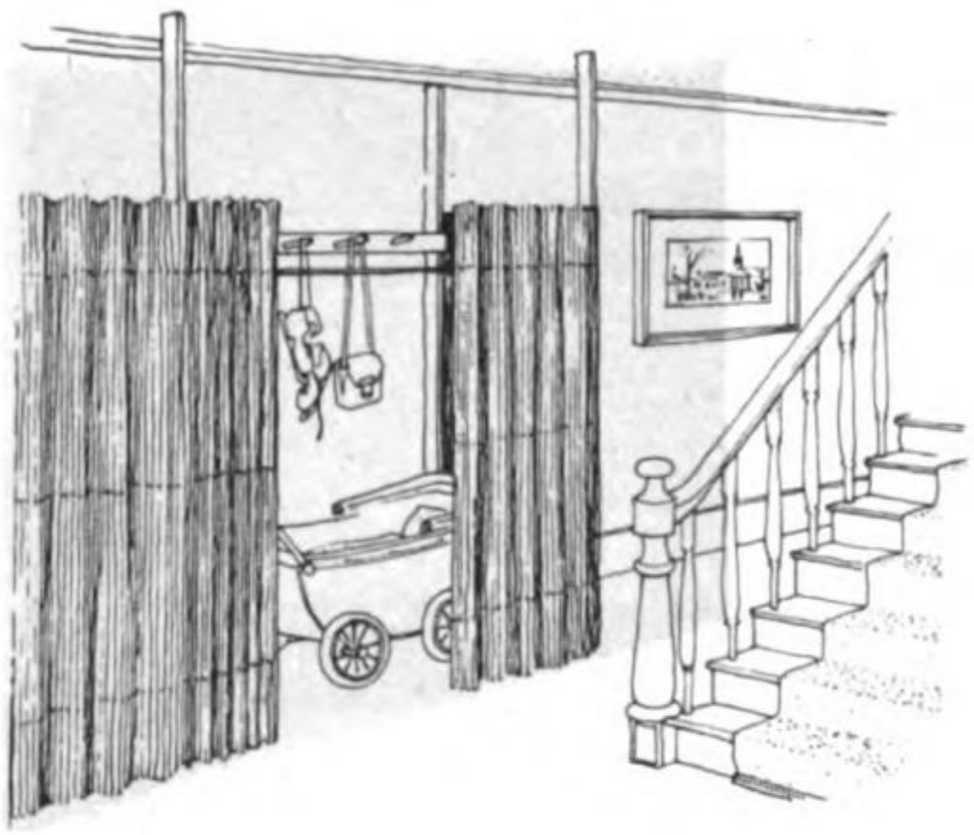
ners, sheet plastic or rubber can be run up from the underside of the tread nose across the tread, curving up to the riser; but this curve should be reinforced by being backed with metal fillet molding (65).

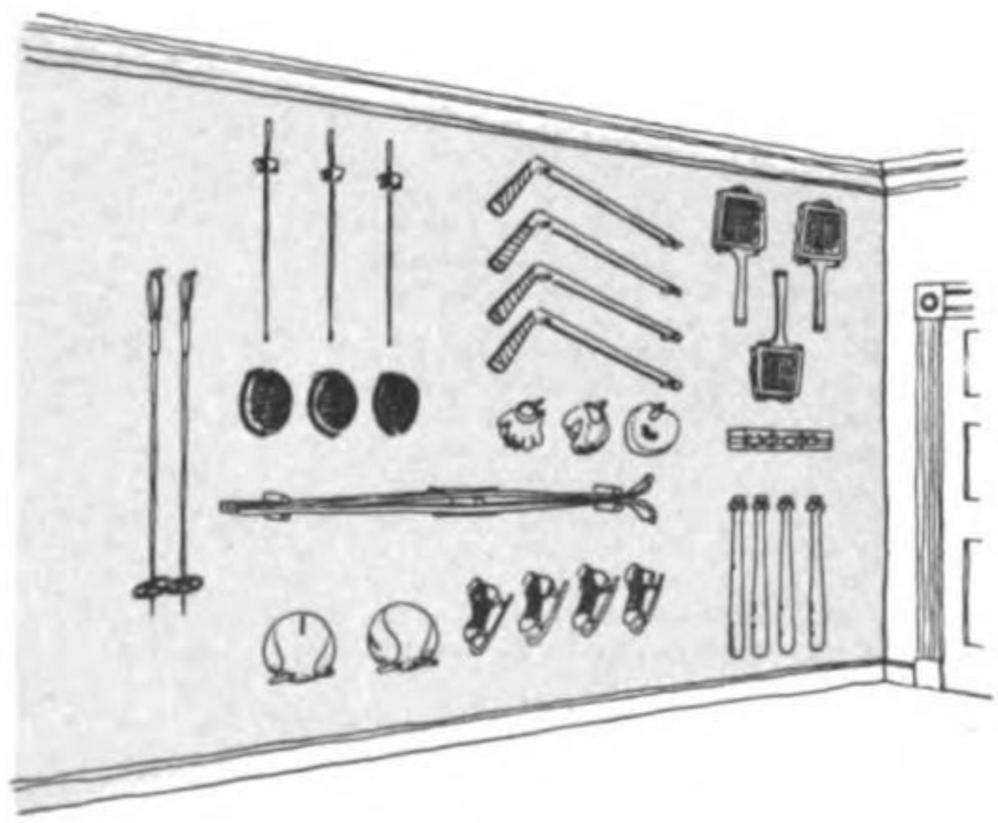
Terrazzo (1) or magnesite (3) can be cast in any shape desired, to form an integral step-and-riser unit, with coving all around it.

Metal treads are more trouble to clean than any of the others.



A long hallway, with an inadequate closet under the stairs was altered by marking off a larger "closet" by 2x4 posts—which carried the track (60) for a wood-slat curtain, forming an easily closed paddock for bicycle, baby carriage, and sports equipment. The same idea can be executed with a floor-to-ceiling drape on a pull cord, or with a large roller shade.

Open risers and closed-in rail save you much work in cleaning the stairs.



If your closets are too small, cover one wall of a hall with a bright-colored, washable covering and arrange such things as sports equipment on the wall like a shop display. Children will like grabbing things on the run, like firemen; and it'll be easier for them to replace equipment here than in a crowded closet.

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Walls along the stairway should be dark and washable to cope with inevitable fingermarks (see the Wall Chart). Also provide space here for a cupboard or closet for stair-cleaning tools and supplies; a hand vacuum; twin dusting mitts; waxes; detergents; and a basket to carry both tools and supplies.

Hallways

3. Despite the modern tendency to suppress them, these will never disappear where privacy is needed, as in the bedroom section of the house. To cut cleaning to a minimum, have:

- Dark washable walls as on the stairs (see Wall Chart).
- Smooth hard floors (see Floor Chart).
- No molding along the walls.
- Flush doors and doorways without thresholds.
- Cove baseboards.

Have no furniture here unless it is useful. Don't decorate hallways in the old-fashioned style of a museum gallery, with chairs, love seats, useless console tables—never to be used but always demanding attention because they are on exhibit. You can make the hall attractive with color and with beautiful materials on the walls and decorate it only with pictures or posters.

Doors

4. Paneled doors, with crevices and moldings to trap dirt, are more trouble to clean than flush doors, and glass is even worse; avoid it unless it's essential for light.

Interior doors with panels, moldings, or glass can be converted to flush, completely smooth doors in one of these ways (not, however, exterior doors):

- Cover the entire door face right to the edge with a hard composition board or thin plywood, fastening with finishing nails or screws. (You may have to shift hinges to enable the door to close properly.) Or cover door face short of stop bead, and finish with a quarter round or square molding. Fill in the panels with plywood, composition board, or similar material, flush with the door surface. Plaster the cracks. Cement on a washable, plastic-coated fabric over the whole, overlapping it on the edges of the door.

Factory-made flush doors are of course available, too, in wood (66) or metal (67). These have flush bucks, leaving only a small border around the opening.

Saddles

Saddles, or thresholds, are a relic of an earlier day, when houses were drafty and heat was precious. They should be eliminated on interior doors to cut out dirt-trapping crevices, to make possible

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sweeping and vacuum-cleaning through from room to room, and to permit the use of all sorts of wheeled carriers in the house.

But keep the saddle on an exterior doorway to help seal it against dust, drafts, and rain—a metal saddle, interlocking with the lower edge of the door, preferably of aluminum, which needs no polishing and doesn't rust.

Knobs and hinges should clean easily, stay clean, and require no polishing.

Knobs and Hinges

For both interior and exterior doors, chromium-plated or cadmium-plated brass for knobs and hinges. Unplated brass, even when lacquered or oxidized, needs frequent polishing.

For interior doors, knobs of smooth (not fluted) glass, smooth plastic, or old-fashioned porcelain can be used.

Use a one-piece combination knob and lock—one less piece to clean, and it also means less handling (and soiling) of the door itself.

The wooden frame around a door (or window) should be kept simple, to cut down the housekeeping time needed for dusting, washing, repainting, and repair:

To Keep Frames Simple

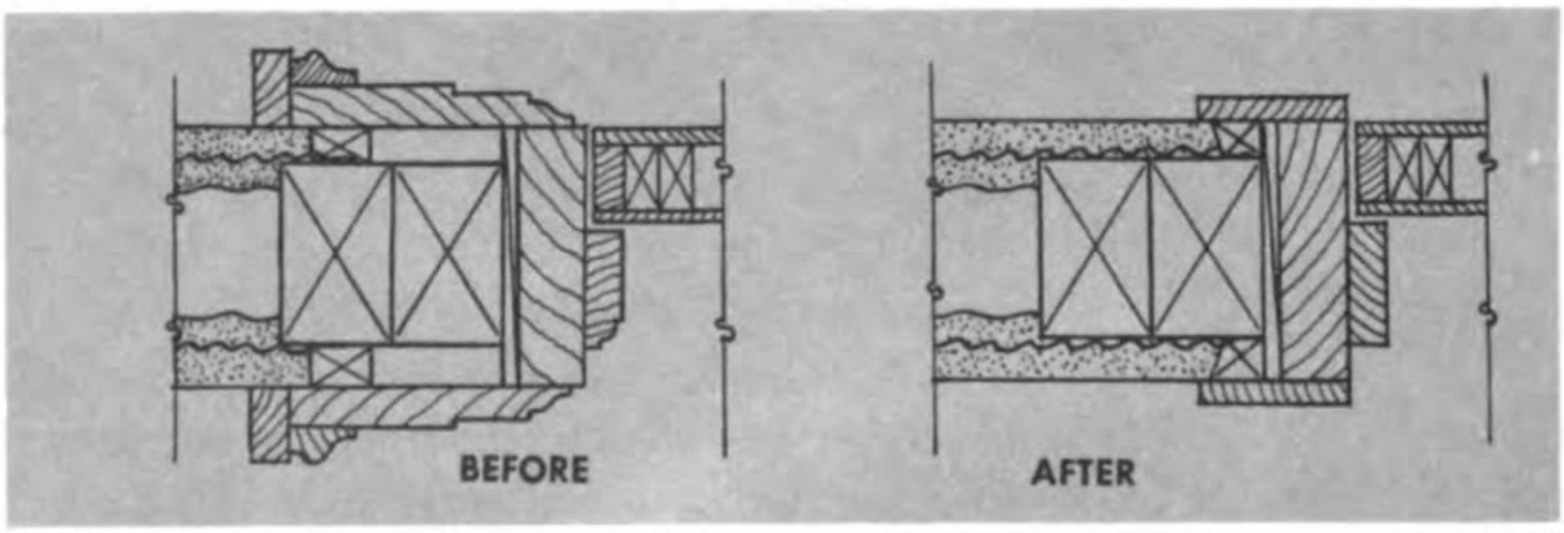
Strip off some or all of the small molding on the frame, eliminating the little grooves and bevels that catch dust.

It is often possible to strip off the entire frame, leaving the casing of the window or the buck of the door (but first consult a carpenter, or your builder or architect).

Under this frame you will usually find a mess of very rough plastering, holes, or exposed bricks or studs. If you fill this with plaster, shrinkage of the plaster will still leave a crack.

Our suggestion for covering this is shown in the illustration: a strip of wood (½ inch thick by 2½ wide) conceals the crack and is cut to project no farther than the casing or buck.

You can also cover this rough area by covering the entire wall with wallboard, wall covering, or heavy wallpaper extending over the patched area right up to the frame. This can be very attractive; if you are building ask to have the frames made this way.



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For finishing wood door and window frames, use spar varnish or enamel with an alkyd resin base (26), paying particular attention to the bottom of the window sash, which most needs weather protection.

Swinging Doors: Opening either way, with pivot hinges allowing them to stand open, these are a work-saver wherever you must go through doors with your hands full. In addition to their obvious value in the kitchen, they are a good idea for the nursery, for a playroom, a sickroom, rooms off a hallway or passage, or in any cramped area where the two-way swing would relieve congestion.

Windows

5. Besides their importance in comfort and heat control, windows are a major housekeeping concern. Poor weather-seal will mean an unremitting battle against dust and soot, soiling, and rain damage. Whether your windows present irksome or minor cleaning problems will depend largely on their design and material.

Window Frames: Metal is better than wood, presenting the slimmest surfaces to clean, no warping, practically no sticking, and with effective weather-stripping built in. Aluminum is better than steel, since it requires no painting and stands up well under most of the weather that might corrode steel. If you prefer wood, get plain frames, order rotproof treatment, and use metal weather-stripping —factory built-in, or applied by a professional.

Resist the temptation to paint window frames white—it's extremely impractical. We have seen very attractive windows with the molding next to the glass painted dark (to camouflage dirt) and the broad surface of the inside frame painted in a light color.

Window Sills can be a lot of trouble, being often exposed to outside dirt and weather. You can have a sill built entirely of marble, but this is expensive. Or cover a wood sill with marble or plate glass cut to size; or strip off all paint and cover with heavy vinolyte film (68) glued on with vinylite cement—this will save much cleaning and repainting.

Window Sashes: Sliding and pivot-swinging sashes are the two basic designs; both types and almost all their variations are available in both wood and metal. Modern home architects have introduced industrial variations—more for artistic than for practical reasons—so if you are building, it is a good idea to know something about the available types of windows, and the advantages and faults of each.

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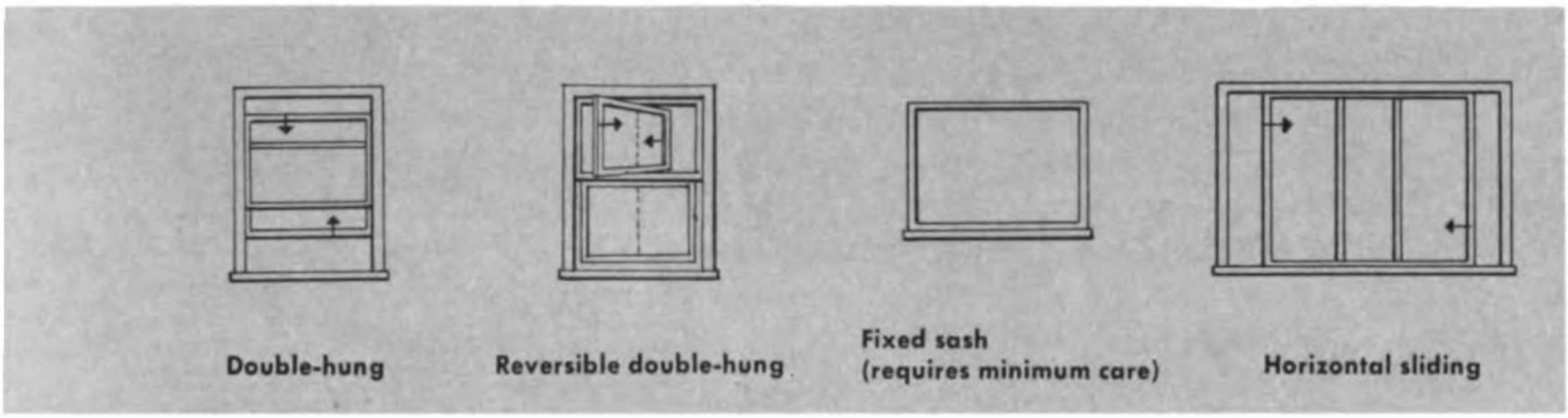


Sliding Sashes

The standard double-hung window is the one you have seen all your life—two sashes sliding up and down past each other.

An aluminum-framed standard double-hung window is unquestionably the most practical. As far as weather-seal, and cutting down the amount of dust entering the room, are concerned, this window is always at least 50 per cent sealed—for even if top and bottom are open, the two sides are always closed. Other advantages are:

Advantages

The simplest frame to clean and maintain (since it is thinner than the wooden double-hung).

The simplest-to-maintain exposed hardware—sash lock and lifts only. The best type of lift bar, continuous for the width of the window, is built in on aluminum double-hung windows, but can be put on others.

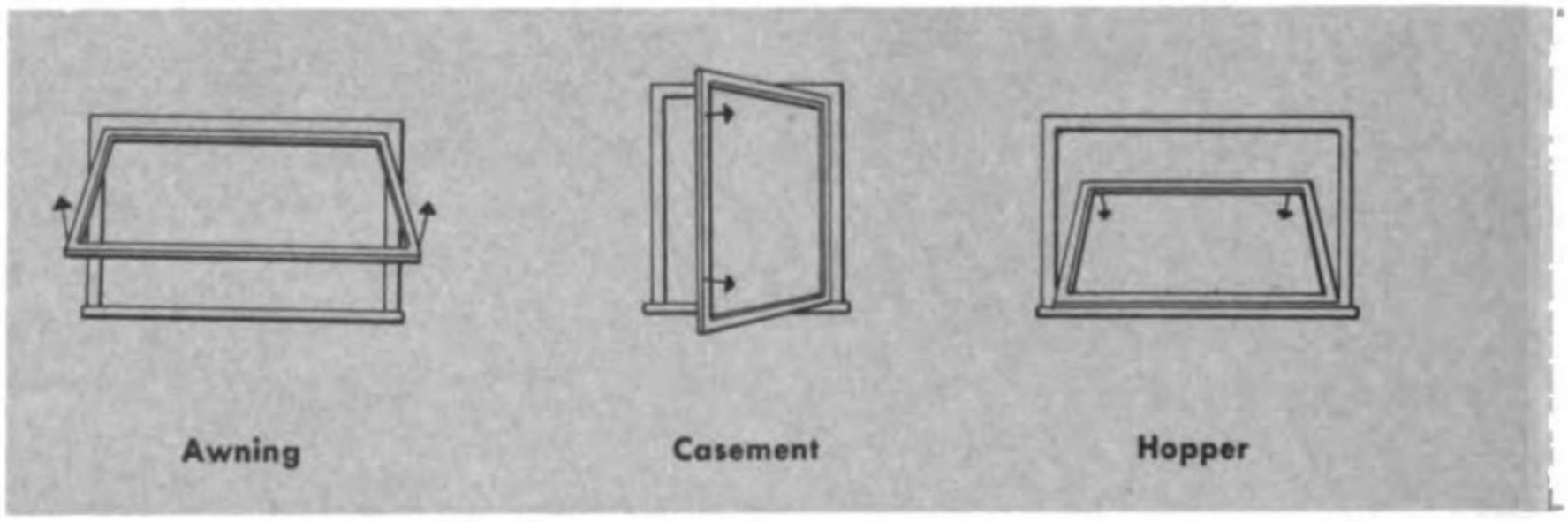
The most practical for screening and window-dressing, taking any kind of screen, blind, curtain, or drapery, inside or out.

Disadvantages

In window-washing, the outside being harder to get at than in certain swinging or pivoting windows.

Sticking is a minimal disadvantage with metal frames, and can be lessened in wooden ones with metal liners, or metal weather-stripping.

Sash balances are needed, and these counterbalance weights are sometimes on cords, which often break. Other types, less apt to get out of order, are spring balances (69) and friction guides (70).



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Other varieties of double-hung windows include:

Horizontal sliding: the sashes open sideways instead of vertically. These sashes can be removed for cleaning both sides (although this is too muscular a job for a housewife to attempt alone), and are available with plastic sills—amazingly little trouble to keep clean.

Reversible double-hung: the sashes still slide up and down past each other, but the entire window in each sash also pivots, opening inward and out like the pivot type. This has all the disadvantages of the pivot-swinging type—discussed just below—notably poor weather-seal.

Pivot-Swinging Sashes

The most common pivot-swinging type is the romantic cottage casement, which swings out. Also available is a type that swings in; other types include awning, hopper, vertical-pivoting, horizontal-pivoting, louver single, double, triple, accordion, etc.

Pivot-swinging types rarely stick, being hinged or pivoted instead of sliding; some are easy to wash both inside and out, and in aluminum their frames offer little cleaning and maintenance trouble.

Disadvantages

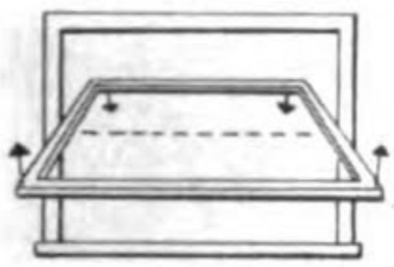
Poor weather-seal—like a door, if opened only slightly, the pivot action separates the entire window from its frame and the seal is 100% broken. This lack of partial seal also means more dust entry. Inswinging casements seal poorly at the sill even when tightly closed.

Complicated weather-seal edges are therefore necessary, and these are dirt traps and hard to clean.

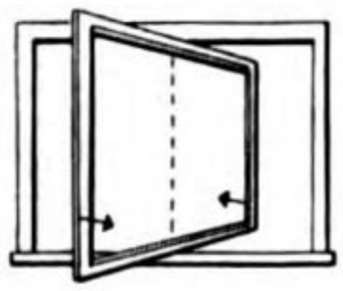
Complicated hardware to clean and keep in repair.

Difficult to screen; the outswing must have an inside screen, either hinged to swing in, fixed (with a rotary or lever mechanism through the screen for opening and closing the window), or one of the new types described on p. 98. The whole screen must be shifted for dusting and window-washing.

Difficult or impossible to cover some inswinging types with blinds or curtains.

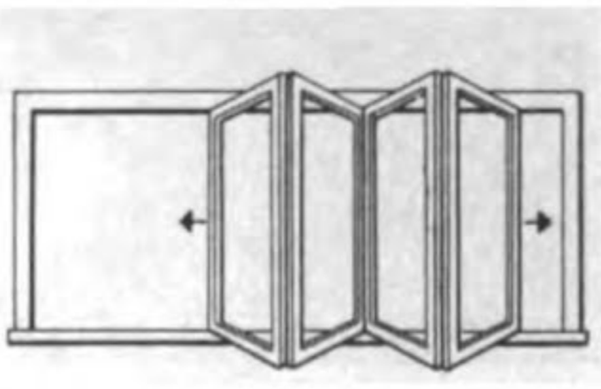


Horizontal-pivoting



Vertical-pivoting

Triple louver



Accordion

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CHAPTER VI

OUTDOOR LIVING

MORE AND MORE living is being done outside the confines of four walls and a ceiling. American homes have been sprouting porches and terraces that range through every degree of shelter to no shelter at all: the removable-glass enclosed porch, the screened porch, the open porch with roof, the terrace, the patio, the lawn. These spots are often the best-liked in the home, comfortable and relaxing for family and guests, and usually the easiest to take care of. Even more important, the months during which the family is out of doors mean a great deal less indoor fuss and cleaning; it might even be a good idea to revert to Grandmother's practice of covering up furniture or even locking off some rooms during these months.

The screened porch, which many consider old-fashioned, certainly should be revived. It is the perfect living-dining room for summer, an outdoor room at night where your reading lamp won't make you an insect collector, and on rainy days the finest playroom for children.

Planning

1. Outdoors needs some housekeeping, however casual, so plan and furnish for the greatest comfort and the least maintenance. The outdoor "room" is apt to get hard use, and there are sun, wind, and rain to cope with.

We have an all-inclusive rule: Look at the walls, floors, and furnishings of any outdoor living area, and ask yourself whether you can wash them with a hose.

The Floor (unless you are on the lawn, where the grass is your floor): Hard-surfaced, *with a drain*, and no covering even on the roofed porch. Grass-fiber, jute, sisal, and hemp rugs, usually considered standard for the porch, take time to clean and are far less durable than a smooth, hard floor.

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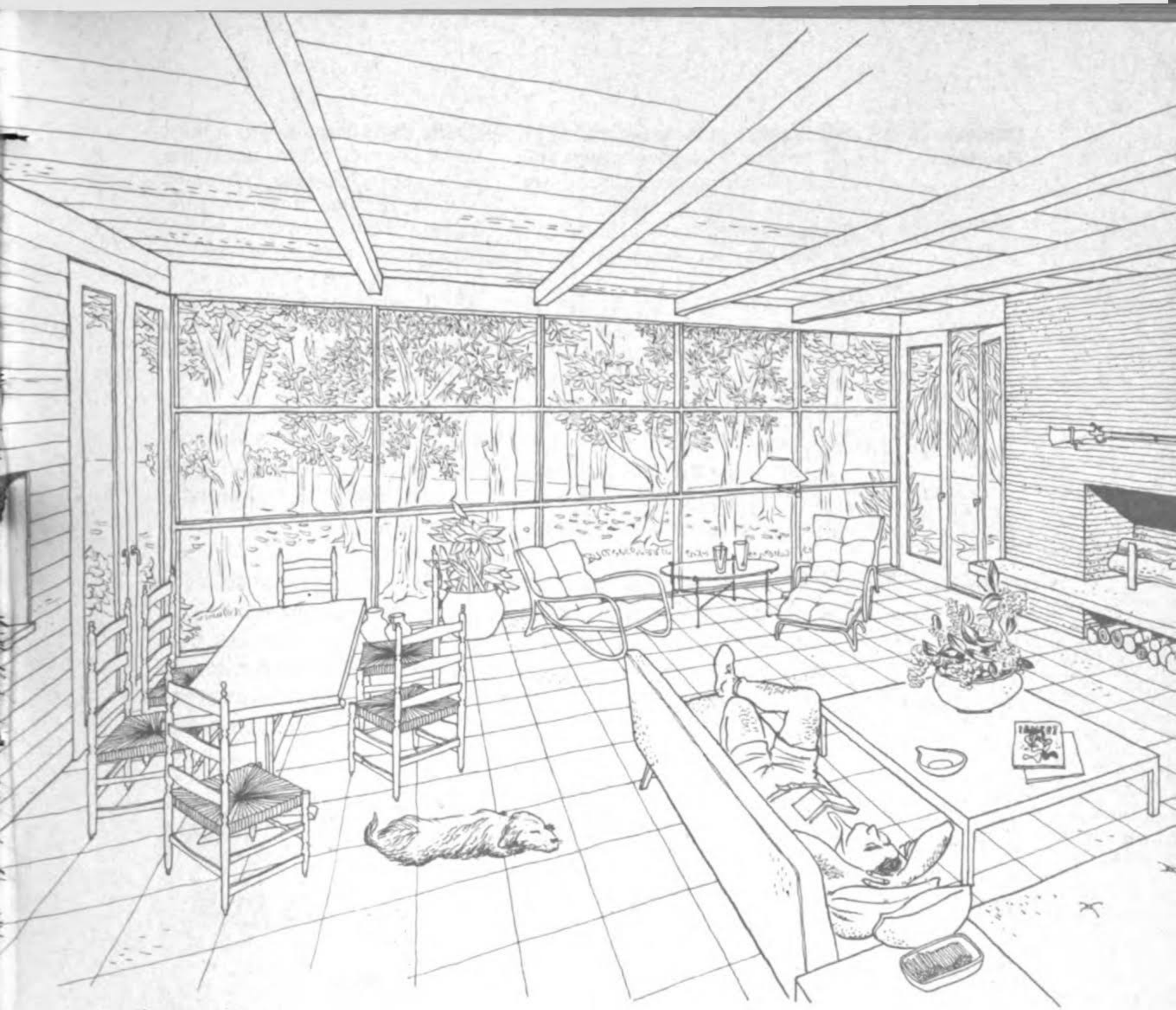

A screened porch was built onto the kitchen wing and provided with a fireplace. The living room and dining room of this house are closed off for the entire summer—all living and eating are done here. Ceramic floor tile; furniture of rattan, wrought iron, spar-varnished wood.

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Outdoor Flooring

Terrazzo (1), magnesite (3), cement, with cove corners and baseboard, as easy to hose down as to sweep.

Masonry such as stone, brick, tile, less easy because of the rough surface.

Flagstone for the terrace; laid in cement so there are no cracks.

Flagstone laid in earth or sand, pesky if weeds grow between the flags, or grass, which must be clipped. Clover needs less frequent clipping but draws bees if allowed to blossom. Plant thyme, low-growing and fragrant when trod on, or dwarf (2-inch) alyssum.

Plastic tile for a softer surface and a less outdoor look, as on a glassed-in porch; washable, and requires no waxing.

Walls will get more soiled than in inside rooms, even on an enclosed porch. More practical here than any washable wall covering are walls that can be hosed, or brushed off with a broom. Consider: masonry, glass, cement, solid wood siding (not plywood). The Wall Chart has comparisons.

Outdoor Furniture

2. The ideal outdoor seating, from a housekeeping point of view, would require no caring-for and could be left out, unattended, all year round. This ideal does exist—in masonry furniture—but that offers absolutely *no* comfort, and certainly cannot be considered a solution to the problem. However, there are a great many types that can be left out all year, in all weather, and offer somewhat more comfort:

Cast Iron or Cast Aluminum: Aluminum is rustless, iron usually guaranteed so for about five years. Both require stripping and repainting after that time.

Folding Chair (88)

with Woven Fiber (90)

with Steel Spring Seat and Back (89)

Baked Enamel on Steel—

"Baked enamel" is a somewhat misleading term; unlike your kitchen range, all these types will need occasional repainting. The steel-spring type has some of the comfort of upholstery. The "fiber" (actually treated paper) is much more durable than it sounds, and fairly comfortable, too. Also available are stationary types, in numerous designs, without springs.

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Note that all the following wood seating needs paint, varnish or creosote every two to five years.

Hickory with Woven Rattan Slats: Somewhat more decorative and comfortable than the more common hickory-with-oak type, and having the same virtues.

Chinese Peel (93): Somewhat less fragile than it looks, its life expectancy is about three years, and since it is quite inexpensive, it offers you a good run for your money.

Steamer Chair: The old-fashioned all-wood kind, with no canvas or detachable cushions to worry about, but therefore somewhat less comfortable.

Rattan: Relatively expensive, very very good-looking. Practical, too, its open construction offering good drainage.

Hickory with Woven Hickory Splits: Similar to rattan in appearance, but though it can be left outdoors all year round, it should be under a roof, as the splits are too closely woven for quick drainage. Best used on covered porches.

Adirondack: A familiar style of wood seating—usually of fir, either spar-varnished or painted, sometimes folding. Open spaces permit drainage of snow, ice, rain.

Cypress—Rustic (92): In the same "family" as hickory, with the same advantages.

Hickory with Oak Slats (91): A very common, time-tested type; durable, sturdy, and treated to repel termites.

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These new combinations of materials are also for year-round use:

Wrought Iron with Split Reed: Unusually good-looking, but still available only in very limited quantity.

Wrought Iron with Galvanized Steel Mesh (96): Comparatively light and comfortable, the best idea so far in heavy metal seating, but just beginning to appear on the market.

Wrought Iron with Cotton Rope: New and still expensive, but this is the forerunner of a new approach—with the emphasis on comfort, without the bother of perishable cushions.

Wrought Iron with Redwood (94): The more stylish California variation on the Adirondack type, with very good drainage. Constructed in thick chunks because this is a soft wood—but it weathers well.

The following are not for year-round use, but may be left in the open for the summer season:

Slung Canvas with Aluminum Frame (97)

Slung Canvas with Wood Frame: The life expectancy of both types of frames varies widely, depending on the quality of workmanship and of materials. Price is generally a reliable guide here. These should be stored away in the winter months, since canvas fades and deteriorates quickly (to camouflage fading in the summer sun, look for neutral colors).

Anodized Aluminum Tubing with Plastic Webbing (95): This may be the best combination yet, being featherweight and resistant. However, plastic webbing is still too new to have a proven resistance to the rigors of outdoor use.

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If you are looking for more comfort than unupholstered types give, get year-round frames that come with light, detachable cushions or pads. Or, for frames without cushions, you can buy or make inexpensive pads. These should be made of water-repellent canvas, duck, or sailcloth (which, however, are *not* waterproof), so that they can be left out most nights of the season, and need be carried under cover only in case of rain.

If you want additional comfort here, you must realize that you are taking on added work. With heavy, spring-cushioned pieces you run the risk of having the springs rust and the inner padding rot. Minimize the work of protecting them by attaching underneath, or in back, rolled-up rubberized "raincoats," and by buying pieces on wheels, easier to move when it rains. In any case, such pieces must be stored away in the winter months.

New designs, materials, and accessories are appearing all the time; measure them for comfort, convenience, ease of maintenance, and durability as against price. In fabrics, smooth and slick ones for easy brushing off are best. But realize that: there is no completely effective waterproofing for stuffed upholstery; all fabrics fade; all plastics become sticky, and eventually brittle, in the sun.

Outdoor Tables: The best for all year round use are tables with slatted wood tops—rain and snow can drain through. Baked-enamel types can be left out in winter, but paint-chipping and surface-denting from snow and ice must be expected. Glass tops are adequate for summer only; solid wood and plywood with unbroken surface are not practical for use, as they tend to warp and blister.

Porches and Sunrooms: Furniture can be selected with more consideration for comfort and decorative appeal, according to the degree of protection from weather. But ease of maintenance is still important. For glass-enclosed sunrooms, use any heavy seating described above, plus chromium-plated steel (not recommended for exposed outdoor use because of peeling and rusting and the high cost of refinishing). Woven-plastic, plastic-coated fabrics for spring cushions, which are often recommended for this type of furniture, are more practical here than out of doors.

Other Outdoor Equipment

[redacted]aterproof covers, "raincoats" for outdoor furniture, come ready-made to fit chairs, chaise longues, sofas, gliders; also in 6- by 9-foot rectangles.

[redacted]udson Bay blankets, all wool, [redacted]practically waterproof.

[redacted]ee hammocks of rope, with or without stretchers, for one reclining or two sitting.

[redacted]ubberized fabric ground mattress (98), for sun-bathing;

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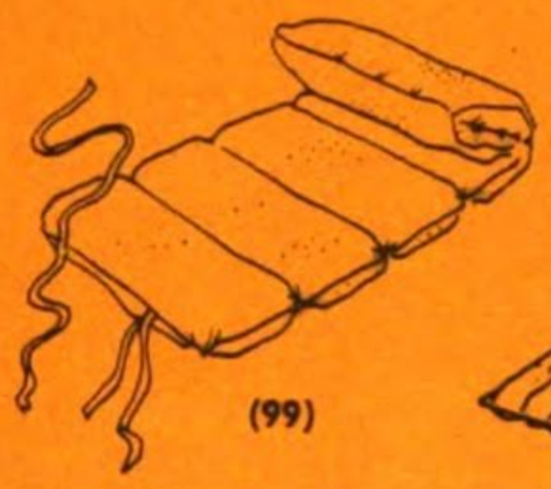

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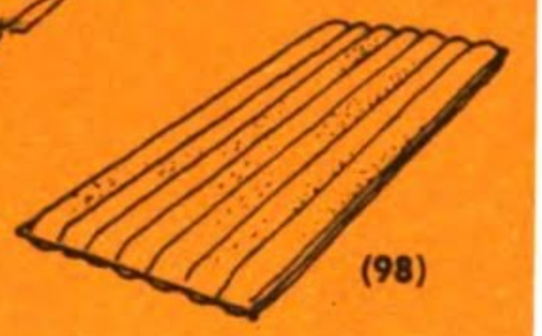

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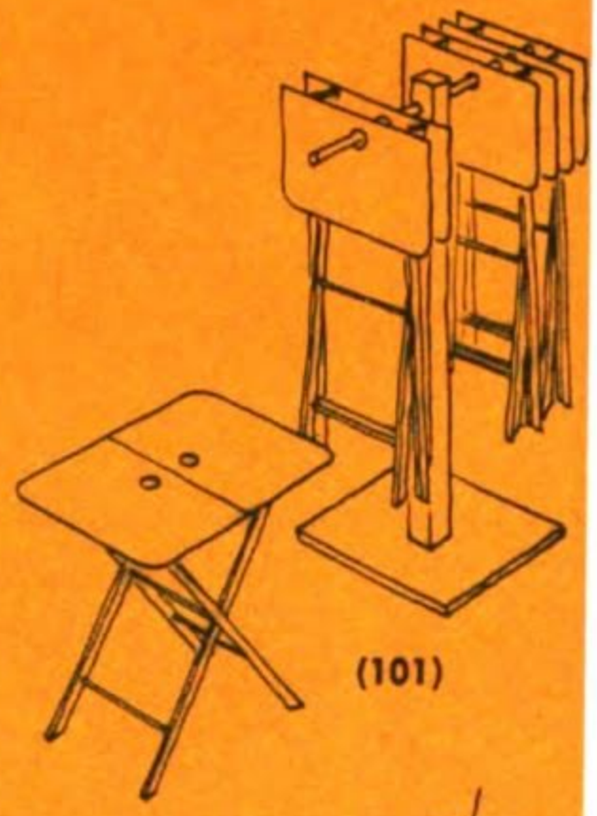

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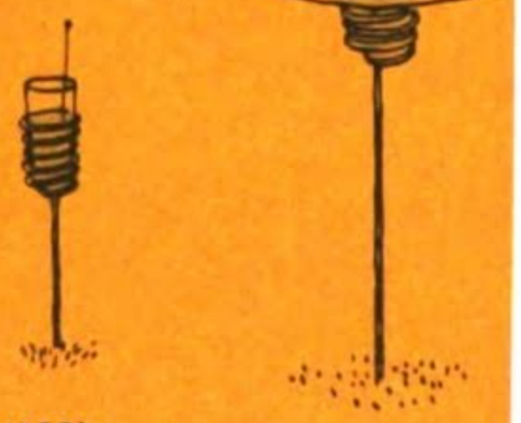

(103)

(104)

(105)

(106)

long lawn pillow or water float.

Kapok-filled canvas mattress, cartridge type (99), easily carried, for use on hard seating or on the ground.

Pads, for sitting on the ground or as upholstery for chairs: of tufted rubber, sponge rubber, foam rubber, inflated plastic or rubber-coated types.

On-the-ground chairs with back rest, either folding wood slats and canvas (100), or non-folding bent ash and rawhide lacing; aluminum tubing and canvas.

Occasional tables, small, of sheet aluminum and aluminum tubing, very light, rustproof (101).

Group of small, lightweight, folding tables of wood; complete with stand to hang them on when not in use.

Coffee tables whose tops are removable trays (102); enamel, lightweight, and of good size, on tubing or wrought-iron stands.

Lawn coasters: holder for glasses on a leg that spears into the ground (103). With aluminum tumbler, a good ash tray.

Small serving tray that sits on a metal frame (104), also mounted on a pointed leg.

Aids to Outdoor House-Keeping

Simple precautions and equipment can save a lot of steps—

Large rustic baskets (105) or painted metal incinerator baskets (106) around for trash, newspapers, bottles.

A minimum of furniture, permanent seating for a small group, and cushions, pads, light folding chairs to be brought out for the occasional crowd.

Storage nearby for these extra

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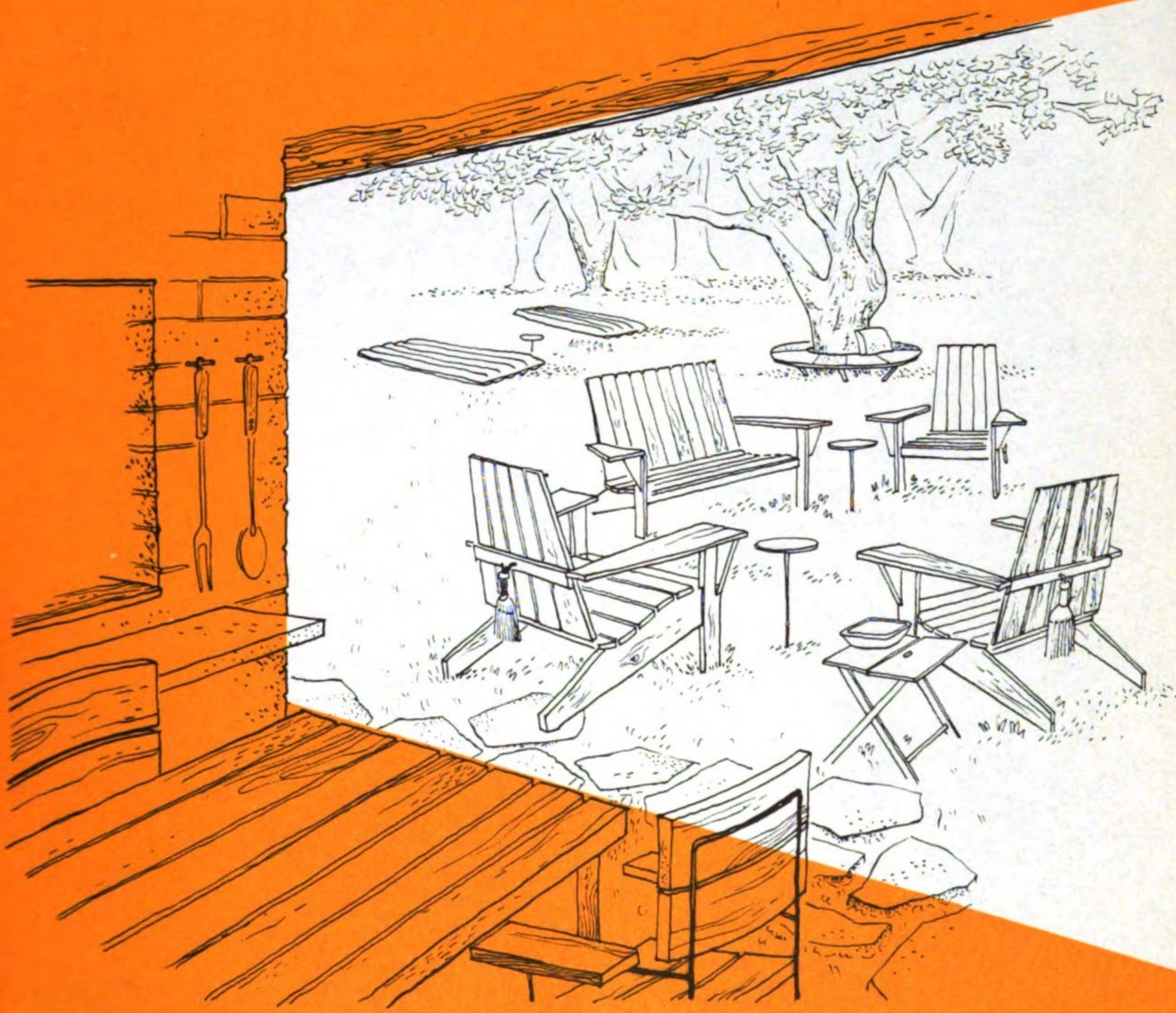
seats, also for the furniture "raincoats."

Shelter nearby if you must carry pillows or push furniture out of the rain or in for the night.

Chairs with wide arms or drop-leaf arms to eliminate side tables and smoking stands; convenient for refreshments, too.

A whisk broom tied to the furniture for a quick brush-off of garden and insect debris; decorative little ones from a handcraft shop.

Sand-filled pottery pieces for cigarette butts.



An outdoor living-dining room, with slat-type wood furniture and inflated rubberized cushions and mattresses that can be left out rain or shine and will need little or no attention from the housewife.

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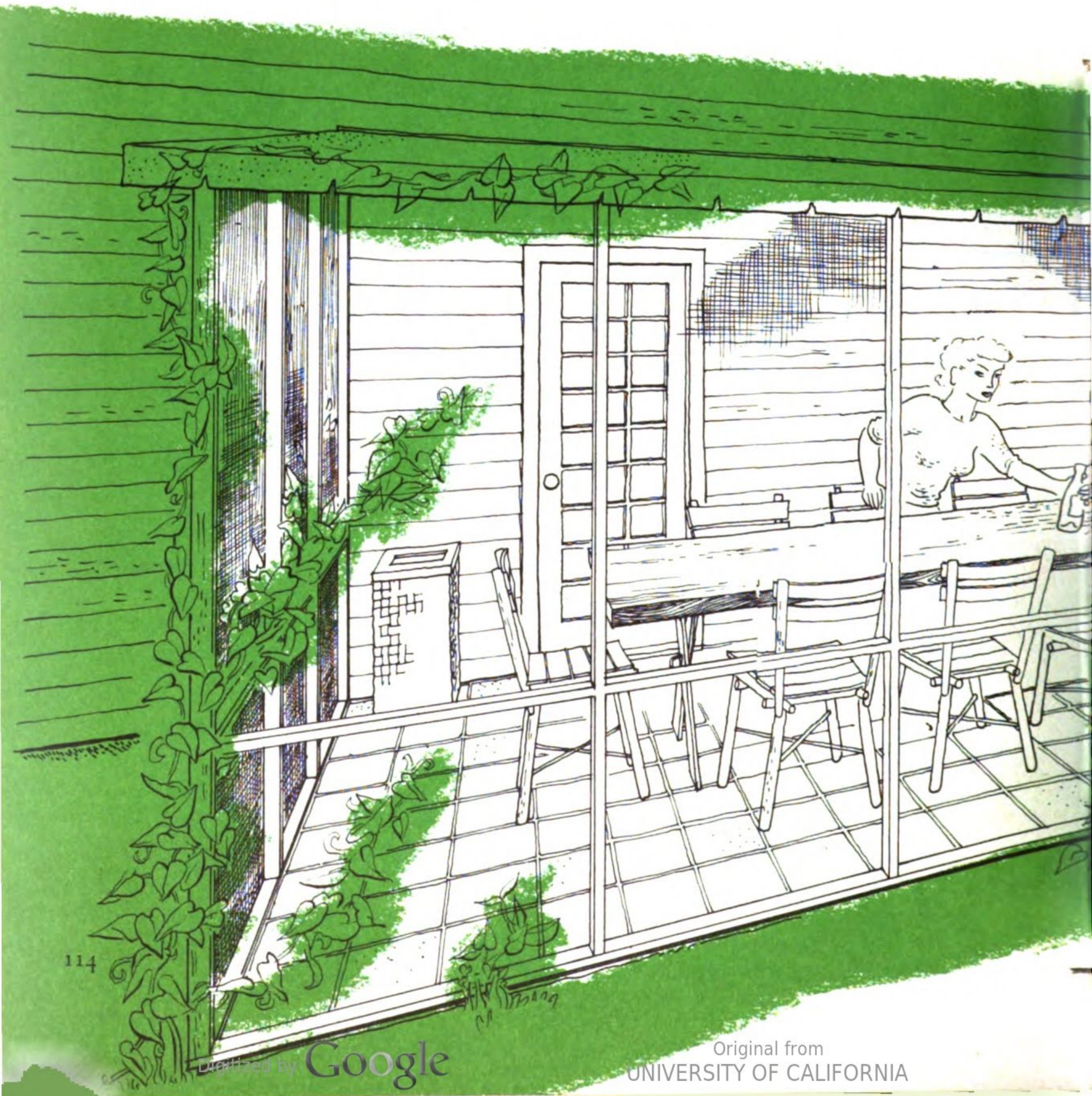
Outdoor Dining

3. Meals on a porch or a terrace, or at a barbecue pit, or perhaps just a picnic supper on your back lawn, can be a very pleasant warm-weather variation in family routine. There is, unavoidably, more work involved in family outdoor dining, but this would seem to be one clear-cut instance of the pleasure involved, making added effort worth while.



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But it is important to keep the additional work at a minimum. Your regular, everyday outdoor dining area should be near the kitchen, not a porch at the other end of the house or a romantic but distant clump of trees. If you have no convenient porch, consider the possibility of a terrace outside the kitchen; stretch canvas over it for protection from heat and rain.

Minimize Meal-time Housework

Paper plates, cups, and napkins—always suitable in this informal setting.

Furniture of a kind that can be hosed and scrubbed; the most practical, stone, glass, or slat-wood table tops; slat-wood benches and chairs.

A large sturdy serving cart to save trips to the kitchen; substituting large lightweight trays (possibly double-deckers) for the cart if the trip involves steps and turnings.

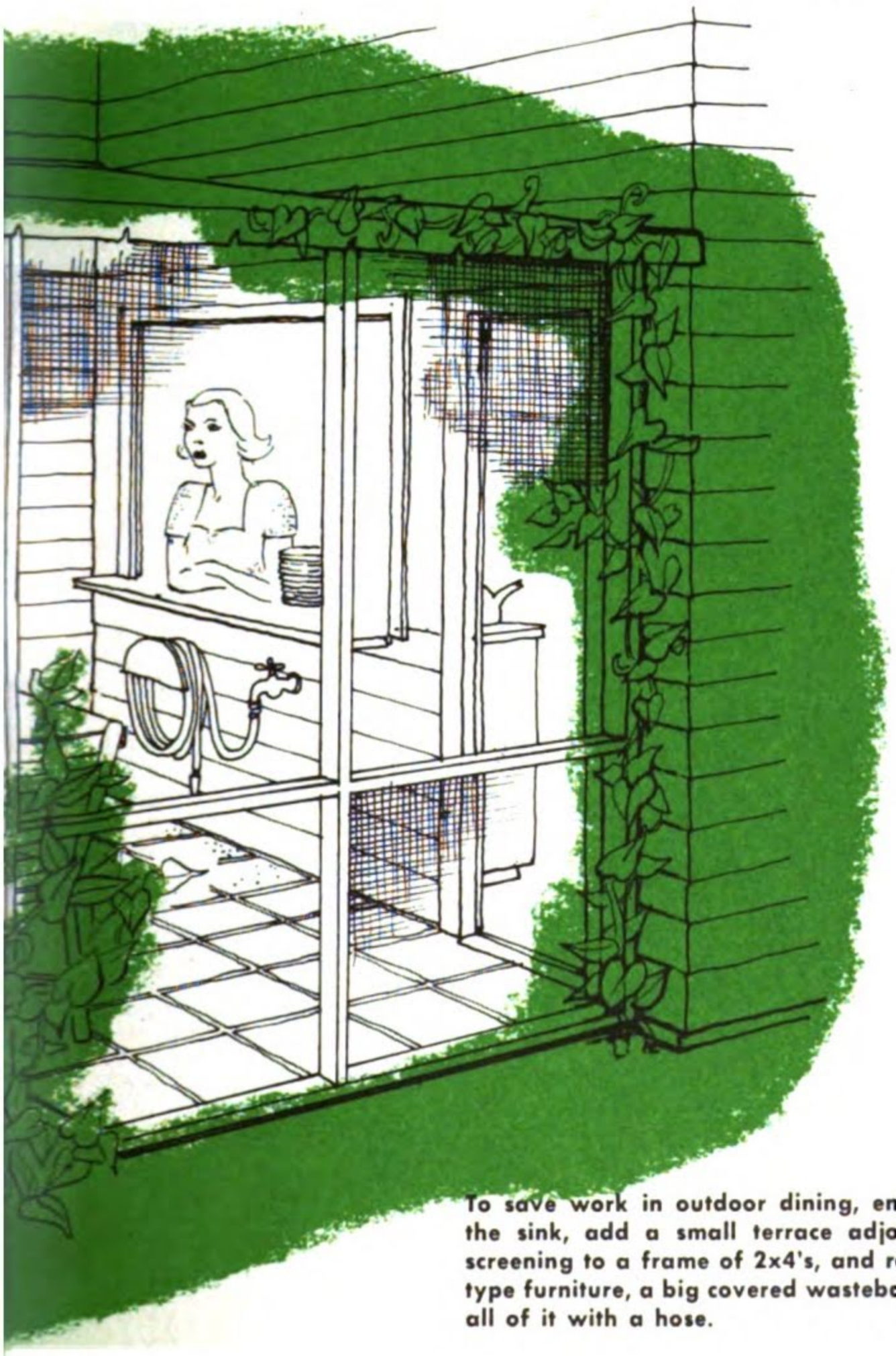
Individual trays, permitting cafeteria-style service.

Outdoor waste disposal—a can, a fireplace, or an incinerator.

A nearby spigot or hose, dishes to be washed off outdoors over a slatted or grilled grating.

A closed cupboard on the porch to hold outdoor tableware.

A weatherproof electrical outlet for cooking and warming equipment – coffee-maker, toaster, grill, etc.



To save work in outdoor dining, enlarge the window over the sink, add a small terrace adjoining the kitchen, tack screening to a frame of 2x4's, and roof it with canvas. Slat-type furniture, a big covered wastebasket, and you can clean all of it with a hose.

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